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Subjectivity and Human Agency

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To my grandparents

I must deliberate from what I am. Truthfulness requires trust in that...and not the obsessional and doomed drive to eliminate it.

Bernard Williams, Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy

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INTRODUCTION

In recent discussions on moral theory, the focus has shifted from an emphasis on what actions are required by moral theories to the problems that arise for the individual agent who applies these theories. The present work continues and furthers this discussion and delineates a particular problem of subjectivity--a problem that arises because of the level at which moral theories are applied: the level of the individual agent. Different problems of subjectivity have been set forth by others. These problems also arise because of the level at which moral theories are applied. The problem of subjectivity that is delineated in the present work, however, is differentiated from these other problems of subjectivity.

The present work concerns the standpoint from which agents act and argues that subjectivity, defined in terms of character, is ineliminable with regard to moral deliberation and that human agency is essentially personal. It is personal, in that, agents act from a subjective standpoint, the standpoint of their internalized conception of value--the standpoint of their character. What is offered is an account of the structure of human agency by developing the notion of character. Much has been written on the notion of character and so this work is not the first to have discussed it. However, most of the philosophical literature on character is normative in nature, that is, it focuses on moral or good character in particular and therefore on specific values. This work is not normative but metaethical, and what is said within the normative

discussions on character is used to elucidate the notion of character in general and its relation to agency. Although this work is metaethical in nature, the implication of this account for normative ethics is discussed. The metaethical account that is given offers a philosophical justification for a normative character development theory.

The present work also delineates the particular problem this account of agency poses for certain types of objective moral theories when they are applied at the level of the individual agent who has a character: theories which either require or permit agents to act either contrary to or apart from their character, that is, theories which require or permit agents to act from an impersonal standpoint. By requiring or permitting agents to act from an impersonal standpoint, a necessary condition of agency is threatened. The particular problem of subjectivity that is delineated is important because it points to the fundamental assumption these theories have regarding moral agency: the assumption that agency is impersonal and that what agents ought to do has nothing to do with their internalized conception of value. It also shows that these competing conceptions of morality, while differing in terms of their theories of the right, share the same assumption regarding moral agency.

In terms of the progression of the argument, in Chapter One, the individual agent is situated within Thomas Nagel's overall framework which differentiates different levels of objectivity. Situating the agent within Nagel's framework is important since the problem of subjectivity arises because of the level of objectivity at which moral deliberation occurs: the level of the individual agent who has particular projects, goals, commitments, and personal relationships (reasons of autonomy).

In Chapter Two, a general characterization of reasons of autonomy (as discussed in the recent literature) is rendered. Reasons of autonomy are not considered here in terms of being the expression of the agent's character so as to later show the significance and implications of what it means to have a character (Chapter Three) and to show how this poses a different problem of subjectivity for certain types of moral theories (Chapter Four). Because moral deliberation occurs at the level of the individual agent who has reasons of autonomy, a particular problem of subjectivity (put forward by Samuel Scheffler) arises for consequentialist theories: the problem of integrity. This problem is delineated and the recent proposals that have been put forward in response to the problem are presented and assessed.

In Chapter Three, reasons of autonomy are seen in terms of being the expression of the agent's internalized conception of value. In this chapter an account of human agency is given by developing the notion of character and showing its relation to agency. It is shown that subjectivity, defined in terms of character, is ineliminable and that human agency is essentially personal.

In light of the account of agency given in Chapter Three, a different problem of subjectivity arises. The purpose of Chapter Four is to delineate the particular problem this account of agency poses for certain types of objective moral theories when they are applied at the level of the individual agent who has a character: the problem of agency. The problem of agency is differentiated from both the problem of integrity as presented in Chapter Two and the particular problem of subjectivity that is put forward by Bernard Williams.

Chapter Five discusses the implication this metaethical account of human agency has for normative ethics and argues that an adequate moral theory is one that reflects this account of agency and does not require or permit agents to act either contrary to or apart from their character, that is, to act from an impersonal standpoint. The type of theory that would reflect this account is a character development theory. The purpose of a character development theory is to tell us what values constitute a good character and how these values are justified and internalized.

CHAPTER I

NAGEL: A VIEW FROM WHERE?

For Nagel, there are different levels of objectivity from which we, the world, values, and beliefs can be viewed. Each level allows for more inclusive views that are less dependent on individual perspectives. Nagel's primary concern is to show that subjectivity is an ineliminable element at each level of objectivity. The present investigation also argues for the ineliminability of subjectivity: subjectivity at the level of objectivity at which moral deliberation occurs. Since Nagel differentiates different levels of objectivity, and since the problem of subjectivity arises because of the level at which moral deliberation occurs, it is important to situate the individual agent within Nagel's overall framework--to situate the individual at the level of objectivity at which moral deliberation occurs.

The purpose of this chapter is threefold: first, and most importantly, to situate the individual agent involved in moral deliberation within the structure of Nagel's overall framework; second, to elucidate Nagel's own conception of morality, which will be critiqued in Chapter Four in light of the present investigation; third, to differentiate the present investigation from the Nagelian project. This chapter will not be a detailed explication of Nagel's entire project; however, for present purposes, a

rendering of its basic structure is requisite.

In The View from Nowhere,[1] Nagel is concerned with a single problem: "how to combine the perspective of a particular person inside the world with an objective view of that same world, the person and his viewpoint included."[2] According to Nagel the problem pervades every area of philosophy, and the question that arises is how to reconcile the subjective and objective elements that coexist within each area.[3] Since it is the basic structure of Nagel's overall framework that is of concern here, only two areas will be discussed because they represent different levels of objectivity: reality and morality, the latter being divided into two parts: value and ethics.

In order to gain a proper understanding of Nagel's basic structure, first the two senses of objective that are reflected within the structure will be delineated. Unfortunately, Nagel does not delineate the two senses at the outset of his work and so the term appears to be used ambiguously. However, a careful analysis of the structure reveals the multi-dimensionality of the concept. Second, a general characterization of the process of objectification will be presented.

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[1] Thomas Nagel, The View from Nowhere (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986). This work is a compilation and expansion of Nagel's previous works. See Mortal Questions (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), especially chapters 9, 12, and 14; and "Limits of Objectivity," in Tanner Lectures on Human Values Vol. 1, ed. S. McMurrin (Utah: University of Utah Press, 1980), pp.75-139. Chapters 2, 4, 8, and 9 of View are close derivatives of parts I, II, and III of "Limits."

[2] Nagel, View, p. 3.

[3] Ibid., pp. 6-9.

Nagel's first sense of objective (obj_a) is understood here to mean impersonal or detached and is contrasted with subjective. The second sense of objective (obj_b) is taken to mean a reflective standpoint from which both subjective and objective (obj_a) elements are recognized as legitimate.[4] As for the different levels of objectivity (represented by reality and morality), each level is a reflective standpoint. In other words, each level of objectivity (obj_b) is comprised of both subjective and objective (obj_a) elements.[5] This structure reflects Nagel's belief that at each level of objectivity (obj_b), subjectivity is an ineliminable element, and is therefore not reducible to the objective (obj_a) element.[6] In relation to morality, this results in the heterogeneity of values[7] which consequently results in the heterogeneity of ethics.[8]

It is important also to understand the process of objectification by which different levels of objectivity (obj_b) can be attained. Nagel's general characterization[9]

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[4] See also Lawrence A. Blum, "Iris Murdoch and the Domain of the Moral," Philosophical Studies 50 (1986):351-352. For a more detailed discussion on the complexity of the concept see Edward F. Mooney, "Living with Double Vision: Objectivity, Subjectivity and Human Understanding," Inquiry 31 (June 1988):223-244.

[5] For his discussion of reality, see Nagel, View, pp. 7-8; 15-19; 26-27. For values, see ibid., pp. 152-156; 159; 162-163; 171-174. For ethics, see Ibid., pp. 8; 154; 162-166; 183-188.

[6] Ibid., pp. 6-9; 27; and Nagel, "Subjective and Objective," in Mortal Questions, pp. 210-213.

[7] Nagel, View, pp. 164-166; 171-174; and Nagel, "The Fragmentation of Value," in Mortal Questions, pp. 128-141.

[8] Nagel, View, pp. 162-166; 183-188; and Nagel, "Fragmentation," pp. 133; 135-138.

[9] Nagel gives a more specific characterization concerning reality and morality in

is as follows:

> At one end is the point of view of a particular individual, having a specific constitution, situation, and relation to the rest of the world. From here the direction of movement toward greater objectivity, involves, first, abstraction from the individual's specific spatial, temporal, and personal position in the world, then from the features that distinguish him from other humans, then gradually from the forms of perception and action characteristic of humans, and away from the narrow range of a human scale in space, time and quantity, toward a conception of the world which as far as possible is not the view from anywhere within it. There is probably no endpoint to this process, but its aim is to regard the world as centerless, with the viewer as just one of its contents.[10]

The distinction between the different levels of objectivity is a matter of degree. Accordingly, the standpoint of an individual is less objective than the standpoint of morality, which is less objective than the standpoint of physics.[11]

According to Nagel, the process of objectification is a "method of understanding...some aspect of life or the world."[12] In order to reach greater levels of objectivity and therefore a greater understanding of the various aspects,

> we step back from our initial view of it and form a new conception which has that view and its relation to the world as its object. In other words, we place ourselves in the world that is to be understood. The old view then comes to be regarded as an appearance, more subjective than the new view, and correctable or confirmable by reference to it. The process can be repeated, yielding a still more objective conception....Thus objectivity allows us to transcend our particular viewpoint and develop an expanded consciousness that takes in the world more fully. All this applies to values and attitudes as well as to beliefs and theories.[13]

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terms of the kind of process necessary for an objective conception of each.

[10] Nagel, "Subjective and Objective," p. 206.

[11] Nagel, View, p. 5.

[12] Ibid., p. 4.

[13] Ibid., pp. 4-5.

Now that the two senses of objective have been delineated and a general characterization of the process of objectification given, a more detailed analysis of the structure of Nagel's overall framework can be rendered.

Levels of Objectivity

A View from Nowhere: Reality

Nagel begins with a depiction of reality that is offered by the methods of natural science, specifically physics. Physics offers a certain conception of objectivity in relation to reality: a physical conception.[14] Because this is a purely physical conception, "things have properties" but "none of these properties are perceptual aspects."[15] In other words, mental phenomena (subjective reality), such as specific points of view or consciousness in general, are necessarily left out of such a conception, yet they exist and are experienced.

Even though Nagel acknowledges the merits of such a conception in yielding a greater understanding of the physical world, he deems it inadequate because it is an incomplete depiction of reality, in that, reality is not exhaustively understood by a physical conception of it.[16] Consequently, Nagel argues against any form of reductionism, since

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[14] For the specific process by which an objective conception of reality in its physical manifestation can be attained, see Ibid., p. 14. The process is unlimited and thus results in a totally objective conception of physical reality.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Ibid., pp. 15-17.

> What motivates these views is the assumption that what there really is must be understandable in a certain way--that reality is in a narrow sense objective [meaning the physical conception of objective] reality. For many philosophers the exemplary case of reality is the world described by physics....But for precisely that reason physics is bound to leave undescribed the irreducibly subjective character of conscious mental processes, whatever may be their intimate relation to the physical operation of the brain. The subjectivity of consciousness is an irreducible feature of reality--without which we couldn't do physics or anything else.[17]

This rejection of physicalist reductionism is not to be understood as a rejection of objectivity,[18] but rather, a rejection of a narrow conception of it in relation to reality.[19] For Nagel, the subjective character of mental phenomena is part of objective reality. This heterogeneous conception of reality necessitates an expanded and more enriched notion of objectivity inclusive of both physical and mental aspects.[20]

If mental phenomena are included within the notion of objectivity, then how are they to be conceived in the world as it is in itself? In other words, what is the process of objectification by which mental phenomena can be objectively understood? Earlier, a general characterization of the process of objectification was given. With regard to mental reality, Nagel offers a more specific process by which it can be objectively understood. The process begins with an individual's conception of his own mind. Nagel claims,

> if we are parts of the world as it is in itself, then we ought to be able to include ourselves--our minds as well as our bodies--in a conception that is not tied

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[17] Ibid., pp. 7-8. For a very clear argument against physicalist reductionism see Nagel, "What Is It Like to Be a Bat?," in Mortal Questions, pp. 165-180.

[18] To the contrary, Nagel's entire project is an endorsement of the objectivity of reality, values and ethics. See Nagel, View, pp. 4-5; 13-19; 27; 138-152; 154.

[19] Ibid., pp. 17; 27.

[20] Ibid., pp. 18; 27; 36; 163.

> exclusively to our own point of view. We ought, in other words, to be able to think of ourselves from outside--but in mental, not physical terms. Such a result...would qualify as an objective conception of mind.[21]

Once an individual views his own mental experiences from outside his own perspective, as one instance among others, then it is possible for him to conceive of the mental experiences of other humans. The conception of other human minds requires a limited process of objectification, one that "does not involve any abstraction from the general forms of [human] experience....All that is involved in the external conception of mind is the imaginative use of this [human] point of view."[22]

The process thus far is a partial one. It is not a process which results in a totally objective conception of the mental aspects of reality, but rather, a conception that reflects what is characteristic of human beings in general.[23]

The question that Nagel raises is whether this process can go further in the sense of transcending human experience altogether, thus separating the concept of mind from a human perspective, or whether the process necessarily is limited by the impossibility of transcendence. Nagel claims that the process can go further in principle, thus offering an expanded conception of mental reality. It is an unlimited

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[21] Ibid., p. 17.

[22] Ibid., p. 21.

[23] It should be noted that this is still a level of objectivity: a level that Nagel sometimes calls "intersubjectivity" or a "species-specific point of view". See Nagel, View, p. 63; "Subjective and Objective," p. 208; and "What Is It Like?," p. 174. This level is less objective than the level of total objectivity (or what Nagel calls "the view from nowhere"), but is more objective than the point of view of a particular individual. See Nagel, "Subjective and Objective," pp. 206; 208.

process of objectification that he considers appropriate for a conception of mental reality.[24]

What is the specific process of objectification by which mental phenomena in general can be objectively understood?

> The first requirement is to think of our own minds as mere instances of something general--as we are accustomed to thinking of particular things and events in the physical world as instances and manifestations of something general. We must think of mind as a phenomenon to which the human case is not necessarily central, even though our minds are at the center of our world. The fundamental idea behind the objective impulse is that the world is not our world. By a general concept of mind I don't mean an anthropocentric concept which conceives all minds on analogy with our own. I mean a concept under which we ourselves fall as instances--without any implication that we are the central instances....I want to think of mind, like matter, as a general feature of the world.[25]

As was shown, transcendence of an individual's own particularity is required to reach a conception and understanding of other human minds. It is through analogy of experience and imagination that makes this possible. However, in order to understand a general conception of mind, transcendence of an individual's type or species is requisite. Since this is not an anthropocentric conception of mind, analogy of experience and imagination do not provide the means necessary for understanding the mental aspects of other species. Nonetheless, "we know there's something there, something perspectival....We can use the general concepts of experience and mind to speculate [emphasis mine] about forms of conscious life whose external signs we

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[24] Nagel, View, pp. 17; 24. An unlimited process is offered by physics for an objective conception of only physical reality.

[25] Ibid., pp. 18-19.

cannot...identify."[26] Even though the perspectival nature of other species is acknowledged, Nagel makes a distinction between acknowledgment and understanding, that is, the mental experiences of other species can be acknowledged as objective and yet not understood subjectively by another species, since mental experiences can only be understood from within the same species. Consequently, an understanding of objective reality is necessarily incomplete.[27]

To summarize, Nagel has rejected the narrow conception of objective reality as offered by physics and has given an expanded conception inclusive of both physical and mental aspects. To state this differently, objective (obj_b) reality consists of both objective (obj_a--physical) and subjective (mental) elements. This composition reflects Nagel's belief that subjectivity is an ineliminable element and not reducible to the objective element. In order to attain a greater conception of both aspects, objective reality must be viewed, not from the point of view of an individual, nor from a specifically human point of view, but from nowhere in particular.[28]

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[26] Ibid., pp. 21; 24.

[27] Ibid., pp. 18; 25-26; 98-99; 108-109; and Nagel, "What Is It Like?"

[28] Nagel chooses to call this the view from nowhere rather than the view from everywhere, because he is aware that humans are not able to view reality from everywhere at once, but only can view it from somewhere: the human point of view. If this is the case, then humans will also be incapable of viewing reality from nowhere in particular. See Nagel, View, chapter 11 for an acknowledgement of these problems. Even though humans are incapable of viewing reality from everywhere, this conception coheres better with Nagel's overall view. Perspective is eliminated altogether if reality is to be viewed from nowhere. This certainly seems contradictory to Nagel's belief that perspective is ineliminable.

A View from the Human Perspective: Morality

The process of objectification necessary for a conception of morality is analogous to that of attaining a conception of other human minds, in that, it is a partial process that does not require the transcendence of human experience altogether.[29]

Nagel

> do[es] not believe that the truth about how we should live could extend radically beyond any capacity we might have to discover it....The truth here could not be radically inaccessible in the way that the truth about the...world might be. It is more closely tied to the human perspective and the human motivational capacity because its point is the regulation of human conduct. It has to be suited to govern our lives day by day, in a way in which theoretical understanding of the...world does not.[30]

As mentioned earlier, certain aspects of physical and mental reality can be acknowledged but not understood by humans. Total objectivity is required in order to attain a general conception and acknowledgment of mind and matter. This will necessarily result in an incomplete understanding of these aspects of reality from the human perspective. However, with regard to morality, Nagel is concerned with what can be understood intersubjectively from the standpoint of humans, and not with what can be acknowledged but not understood.[31]

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[29] It should be noted that Nagel describes the process as being analogous to that of attaining an objective conception of reality. See Nagel, View, p. 140. This would be an unlimited process requiring the transcendence of human experience. This analogy, however, is misleading because it is not supported within Nagel's general discussion of morality, which clearly supports a limited process of objectification.

[30] Ibid., pp. 139; 186.

[31] Ibid., p. 140.

Even though a morality completely dissimilar from that of humans can be acknowledged,

> we do not have access [to the morality]...of such creatures. Unless we can understand their lives, experiences, and motives from inside, we will be unable to appreciate the values to which they respond in a way that allows us to objectify them accurately. Objectivity needs subjective material to work on, and for human morality this is found in human life.[32]

If the purpose of morality is the regulation of human conduct, and if in order to be effective it must be "widely accepted and internalized,"[33] then it must be understood intersubjectively. Consequently, an acknowledgment of incommensurable moralities will not ensue in acceptance, which in turn will not ensue in the regulation of human conduct. It is apparent that what is required is "a detachment from particular [human] perspectives and transcendence of one's time and place."[34] That is, transcendence of an individual's own particularity, not species, is a requisite requirement for the understanding, acceptance, and internalization of morality.[35]

Value

The previous discussion distinguished the process of objectification necessary for a conception of reality from the process required for a conception of morality, thus distinguishing their respective levels of objectivity. Nagel delineates another

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[32] Ibid., p. 186.

[33] Ibid.

[34] Ibid., p. 187. See also Ibid., p. 140.

[35] Again, even though this is a limited process of objectification, it is still a level of objectivity. "The standpoint of morality is more objective than that of private life, but less objective than the standpoint of physics." Ibid., p. 5.

disanalogy concerning what is replaced or modified when theoretical and practical reasoning are advanced by a process of objectification appropriate to each.

> In theoretical reasoning objectivity is advanced when we form a new conception of reality that includes ourselves as components. This involves an alteration or...extension of our beliefs [emphasis mine]. In the sphere of...practical reasoning...the new viewpoint will be not a new set of beliefs, but a new or extended set of values [emphasis mine]. We try to arrive at normative judgments, with motivational content, from an impersonal [intersubjective] standpoint. We cannot use a nonnormative criterion of objectivity, for if values are objective, they must be so in their own right and not through reducibility to some other kind of objective fact [physical or mental]. They have to be objective values, not objective anything else.[36]

When the purpose is descriptive, ascent to the objective standpoint affects beliefs, since new facts about reality are discovered. However, when the purpose is normative, values are formed or modified. Hence, in terms of value, the question is no longer, "What is in the world considered from a view from nowhere?" but, "What is there reason to do or want considered from an intersubjective point of view?"[37]

Nagel rejects a purely psychological explanation of reasons for action--reasons explained in terms of values. When "the objective standpoint is assumed to be one of pure [psychological] observation and description," reasons for action seem to disappear and thus are excluded from the start.[38] For Nagel, the objective standpoint is not merely descriptive in nature; therefore, reasons are recognized as reasons from the objective standpoint and not as psychological facts.

> What we see...is not just people being moved to act by their desires, but people acting and forming intentions and desires for reasons, good or bad....[W]e do not

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[36] Ibid., pp. 138-139.

[37] Ibid., p. 140.

[38] Ibid., p. 142.

> drop out of the evaluative mode as soon as we leave the subjective standpoint. The [psychological explanation] merely connects action with the agent's desires and beliefs, without touching the normative question whether he had an adequate reason for acting....If this is all that can be said,...then I think it would follow that we don't really act for reasons at all. Rather, we are caused to act by desires and beliefs, and the terminology of reasons can be used only in a diminished, nonnormative sense to express this kind of explanation.[39]

For Nagel, the implication for ethics is clear. If a psychological explanation is given for normative reasons--in that actions are really caused by desires and beliefs --then there can be no objective values providing such reasons.[40] If no values or reasons can be acknowledged from the objective standpoint, then objectively nothing is right or wrong. Consequently, the only alternative is a subjectivist account of desires and reasons for action, thus precluding any other alternative to ethical relativism.[41]

If there are objective values, then how are they discovered?[42] In order to discover existing values, "the form which reasons for action take" has to be discovered,

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[39] Ibid.

[40] Objective values can provide such reasons if they are inculcated within an individual agent. Nagel's dichotomy does not allow him to make this connection.

[41] Ibid., pp. 141-142; 186-187. Nagel's rejection of skepticism and idealism in relation to reality is evidenced by his espousal of scientific realism. See Ibid., p. 27. Nagel's rejection of a subjectivist account of values or reasons results in his espousal of normative realism. See Ibid., pp. 139-143. Nagel does not try to prove the possibility of objective values but tries to make a strong case by refuting the most convincing arguments against it. See Ibid., pp. 143-149. The possibility of realism with regard to values, and the disanalogy between this type of realism and that of science is not of concern in the present investigation, but rather, Nagel's broader conception of objectivity in relation to values. As to whether Nagel's normative realism is in fact a realism or really some form of idealism, see Stephen L. Darwall, review of The View from Nowhere in Ethics, 98 (October 1987):140-147.

[42] Nagel makes it clear that what is being discovered "is not a new aspect of the external world, called value, but rather just the truth about what we and others should do and want." Nagel, View, p. 139.

since values are what provide reasons to act.[43]

The method for discovering normative reasons begins with reasons that appear to be common from an individual's point of view and the point of view of others, that is, reasons that particular individuals have for acting. "As in other domains, we begin from our position inside the world and try to transcend it by regarding what we find here as a sample of the whole."[44] The question is, "What general forms do these reasons take from an objective point of view?" There are different types of generality, since reasons vary as to their form. However, Nagel concentrates on the way in which reasons vary in their relatedness or relativity to the individual agent for whom they are reasons, that is, there are reasons that are not relative solely to the agent and reasons that are.[45]

Reasons that are not relative to the agent are called agent-neutral reasons.[46] What makes this type of reason neutral is that anyone would accept it as a reason from

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[43] Ibid., p. 141.

[44] Ibid.

[45] Ibid., pp. 152-156. As will be seen, for Nagel, this type of variance marks the difference between consequentialist and deontological theories.

[46] It should be noted that Nagel also uses the terms, "impersonal", "outcome-centered", and "objective" to describe this type of reason. See Nagel, "Fragmentation," p. 133. In order to avoid solipsism, Nagel in his first book, The Possibility of Altruism (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), especially chapters 10, 11, and 12, defended the view that only agent-neutral reasons for action existed. Consequently, reasons that appeared to be agent-relative were reducible to agent-neutral ones. It will be evident in the subsequent discussion on agent-relative reasons that Nagel has since abandoned this position. For critical comments on Nagel's earlier view see Darwall, Impartial Reason (New York: Cornell University Press, 1983), especially chapter 10; and Nicholas Sturgeon, "Altruism, Solipsism, and the Objectivity of

an objective standpoint. In other words, it is not a reason that is accepted on the basis of its being related to a particular individual in a certain way, but rather, on the basis of its unrelatedness to any particular individual.[47] Not only does an agent-neutral reason "not include an essential reference to the person who has it," but it concerns what should happen, meaning what state of affairs is objectively preferable or "better in itself, considering the world as a whole."[48]

Nagel considers pleasure and pain to show how agent-neutral reasons can arise. He supports the claim that pleasure is intrinsically good and pain is intrinsically bad, in that, not only are the value of pleasure and the disvalue of pain recognized and understood, but they are accepted by anyone "in abstraction from who [they] are."[49] These values engender agent-neutral reasons either to promote pleasure or alleviate pain; thereby, anyone has a reason to want it to happen.[50]

Reasons," Philosophical Review 83 (1974):374-402.

[47] Nagel, View, pp. 152-153.

[48] Ibid., pp. 152; 163.

[49] Ibid., p. 157. See also Ibid., pp. 159-162.

[50] There are other things that have intrinsic value that engender agent-neutral reasons besides pleasure and the absence of pain--"liberty, general opportunities and the basic resources of life." Ibid., p. 171. Anyone has a reason to want these goods promoted from an objective standpoint. Nagel's notion of intrinsic value should not be confused or associated with Moore's ethical realism. For Nagel, agent-neutral values have motivational force from an intersubjective point of view. They do not "retain their practical importance even if no one will ever be able to respond to them." Ibid., p. 153. See also Ibid., pp. 139-140; 148.

Nagel uses the concept of pain to try to illustrate how an agent-neutral reason for it to be alleviated arises. Nagel maintains, that

> ...the pain, though it comes attached to a person and his individual perspective, is just as clearly hateful to the objective self as to the subjective individual. I know what it's like even when I contemplate myself from outside, as one person among countless others. And the same applies when I think about anyone else in this way. The pain can be detached in thought from the fact that it is mine without losing any of its dreadfulness. It has, so to speak, a life of its own. That is why it is natural to ascribe to it a value of its own....The desire to be rid of pain has only the pain as its object. This is shown by the fact that it doesn't even require the idea of oneself in order to make sense.[51]

Thus far, Nagel has shown how agent-neutral values can be revealed through the discovery of agent-neutral reasons that anyone would accept from an objective standpoint. Is this the only form that reasons and values take from such a standpoint? Before rendering Nagel's reply, it is important at this juncture briefly to reiterate his position concerning objective reality. Nagel finds the depiction of reality as offered by physics inadequate because it is incomplete, in that, it only offers a physical conception. Consequently, mental phenomena, which also seem to be part of objective

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[51] Ibid., pp. 160-161. For Ingmar Persson, even though the pain can be detached in thought so that the desire to alleviate it has only the pain as its object, it does not prove that the motivating force to alleviate it is necessarily transmitted when pain is viewed from the objective standpoint. See his review of The View From Nowhere, in Theoria 54 (1988):63. Darwall, on the other hand, finds such motivation "both plausible and interesting....The capacity to respond in this way to pain considered simply as a creature's and not as one's own seems to be a central aspect of a normal human psyche....From that point of view pain is intrinsically motivating; it seems bad in itself." Review of The View from Nowhere, p. 146. This disagreement, though in direct response to Nagel's discussion of agent-neutral values, seems to be over a question of the nature of human psychology. This is not the way in which Nagel understands agent-neutral values as discovered from an objective standpoint. For more on Darwall's own position with regard to intersubjective values, see Impartial Reason, chapters 11 and 12.

(obj_b) reality, are necessarily left out or reduced to what can be explained in physical terms. Nagel, however, contends that reality is not exhaustively understood by a physical conception of it and proposes a broader notion inclusive of both physical ($objective_a$) and mental (subjective) aspects.

Nagel's broader notion of objectivity in relation to reality reflects his rejection of reductionism. In the realm of reasons and values, Nagel also argues against a narrow reductionist conception.

> In ethics, as in metaphysics, the allure of objectivity is very great....In the area of value that means a search for the most objective [agent-neutral] account of all reasons for action: the account which engages us from a maximally detached standpoint.
>
> This idea underlies the fairly common moral assumption that the only real values are impersonal values, and that someone can really have a reason to do something only if there is an agent-neutral reason for it to happen....We can no more assume that all values are impersonal than that all reality is physical....If certain perspectives evidently exist which cannot be analyzed in physical terms, we must modify our idea of objective reality to include them....Similarly, if certain reasons for action which appear to exist cannot be accommodated within a purely neutral system...then we may have to modify our realist idea of value and practical reason accordingly.[52]

These reasons and values that cannot be accommodated within a neutral system are relative in form and are not reducible to agent-neutral ones, since their existence is independent.[53] What Nagel is espousing here is the heterogeneity of reasons and values, in that, the sources of reasons and values are not unitary, "displaying apparent multiplicity only in [their] application to the world....They are formally different

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[52] Nagel, View, pp. 162-163. See also Ibid., p. 187.

[53] Ibid., pp. 165-166.

....[and] the formal differences among types of reasons [and values] reflect differences ...in their sources."[54]

Reasons that are relative to the agent are appropriately called agent-relative reasons.[55] What makes this type of reason relative is that it is accepted only on the basis of its being related to a particular individual in a certain way, and is not accepted by anyone who considers it from the objective standpoint. In other words, an agent-relative reason can be accepted only when the perspective of the individual who has it is occupied, not when it is transcended. Because of this relatedness, an agent-relative reason includes an essential reference to the individual who has it and concerns what an individual should do or want. It does not concern what should happen, considering the world as a whole.[56]

Like agent-neutral reasons, agent-relative reasons are objective since they can be recognized and understood from an objective point of view. However, they cannot be accepted by anyone from this standpoint since the perspective from which the reason is accepted is left behind by the process of objectification.[57] "So objective understanding

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[54] Nagel, "Fragmentation," pp. 131-133. See also Nagel, View, pp. 168-170; 176-177. For a different type of explanation for the irreducibility of agent-relative values, see Evelyn M. Barker, "Personal Identity and Concrete Values," Analecta Husserliana 31 (1990):115-124. For Barker, a concrete (agent-relative) value cannot be reduced to an abstract (agent-neutral) value because "a concrete value has an intentionality that gives it a different kind of moral significance." Ibid., p. 120.

[55] These are also referred to as "personal", "agent-centered", and "subjective". See Nagel, "Fragmentation," p. 133.

[56] Nagel, View, pp. 153-154; 163; 165.

[57] Ibid., pp. 153; 165; 168-170; 182-183.

of such reasons does not imply objective acceptance of them."[58]

Nagel delineates three types of agent-relative reasons, only two of which are discussed. For present purposes, only one type shall be briefly considered here: deontological reasons.[59]

Deontological reasons stem "from the claims of other persons not to be maltreated in certain ways."[60] Since these are reasons that stem from the claims of others, they are not optional but demands that apply to everyone.[61] What makes these reasons agent-relative is that they "have their full force against your [emphasis mine] doing something--not just its happening."[62] In other words, these reasons are not concerned with what should happen, but with what the individual agent should do. Nagel enumerates several of the standard types of deontological reasons such as an

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[58] Nagel, "Limits," p. 123. The distinction no longer is between acknowledgement and understanding as in the realm of reality, but between understanding (including acknowledgement/recognition) and acceptance.

[59] Nagel, View, pp. 165-166. Nagel also discusses agent-relative reasons of autonomy. This type will be the primary focus of the subsequent chapters and shall not be considered here. Merely for the sake of completeness, Nagel mentions but does not discuss a third type: reasons of obigation (special obligations to those to whom we are closely related). Nagel is not fully convinced that reasons of obligation are agent-relative, meaning they may be justified from an impersonal (agent-neutral) standpoint. Cf Nagel, "Fragmentation," p. 132. This problem is not resolved in Nagel's work nor is this a problem that affects the present investigation.

[60] Nagel, View, p. 165. See also Nagel, "Fragmentation," pp. 132-133; and Nagel, "Subjective and Objective," p. 203.

[61] Nagel, View, pp. 175; 178; 181.

[62] Ibid., p. 177. See also Ibid., p. 165; and Nagel, "Subjective and Objective," pp. 203-205.

obligation to keep promises and restrictions/prohibitions against lying, killing, and sacrificing the innocent, etc.[63]

In terms of promises,

> It may be a good thing that people keep [them],...but the reason a person has to keep his own promises is very different from the reason he has to want other people unconnected with him to keep their promises--just because it would be a good thing, impersonally considered. There certainly are things we do for such reasons, but...a more personal outlook is essential. It is your <u>own</u> relation to the other person...that moves you, not a detached concern for what would be best overall.[64]

This example illustrates how an agent-relative deontological reason only arises when the claim of another person exists, and when the perspective of the individual agent is occupied and the reason is related to the agent in a certain way. In this case, an agent-relative reason arises when the agent has made a promise, thus creating a relationship with another: promisor and promisee. With regard to other individuals, "the content of the objective judgment [to keep promises] concerns only what <u>they</u> should do."[65] That is, it is not a reason that would be accepted by <u>anyone</u> in abstraction from who they are--in abstraction from the relationship between promisor to promisee. For Nagel, "the perspective of the agent has an importance in practical reasoning that resists domination by a conception of the world as a place where good and bad things happen whose value is perspective free."[66] That is, reasons to act are

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[63] Nagel, <u>View</u>, p. 176.

[64] Nagel, "Fragmentation," p. 132.

[65] Nagel, <u>View</u>, p. 154.

[66] Ibid., pp. 180-181.

not exhausted by what can be accepted from an impersonal point of view. The perspective of the individual agent also determines what there is reason to do.

In conclusion, Nagel's rejection of the homogeneity of reasons allows for a more enriched notion of objectivity in relation to values inclusive of both agent-neutral and agent-relative ones. In other words, objective (obj_b) values consist of both objective (obj_a--agent-neutral) and subjective (agent-relative) elements. Again, this conception reflects Nagel's belief that subjectivity is ineliminable, not only in the realm of reality, but also in the realm of values.

Ethics

This section will center on the following: first, the implication of this broader conception of values for ethics; second, situating the individual agent involved in moral deliberation within the structure of Nagel's overall framework; third, distinguishing the present investigation from the Nagelian project.

In the previous section agent-neutral reasons for action were differentiated from agent-relative (deontological) ones; thus showing how reasons and therefore values vary in their relativity to the agent. It is important to understand, that for Nagel, this variance in relativity represents different perspectives or points of view: agent-neutral values representing an impersonal or objective point of view, and agent-relative ones representing a personal or subjective point of view.[67] This variance in relativity and perspective marks the difference between consequentialist and deontological theories, in

[67] Nagel's own framework commits him to uphold both perspectives. It will be shown in Chapter Four that this dichotomy is problematic.

that, consequentialism is based solely on agent-neutral values whereas deontology is based on agent-relative ones.[68]

Consequentialism, generally characterized, holds that the only reasons for action are agent-neutral ones, and that ethics is only concerned with what should happen and not independently with what the individual agent should do. In other words, the only reason that can be given for action is that it would result in a state of affairs that is objectively preferable, considering the world as a whole. However, as we have seen, reasons for action are not exhausted by agent-neutral ones, but are also relative in form and irreducible. The implication of this heterogeneous conception of reasons and

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[68] Ibid., pp. 180-185. It should be noted that this is not the traditional account of the distinction, but rather an account that is used in the current literature. The debate between consequentialism and deontology is now being discussed in terms of agent-neutral versus agent-relative or agent-centered theories. For example, see Darwall, "Agent-centered Restrictions from the Inside Out," Philosophical Studies 50 (1986):291-319; Shelley Kagan, The Limits of Morality (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989); and Samuel Scheffler, "Deontology and the Agent: A Reply to Bennett," Ethics 100 (1989):67-76. It also is important to note that the term "agent-centered" has different meanings. As we have seen, for Nagel, deontology is agent-centered because deontological reasons "instruct each person to determine the rightness or wrongness of his acts solely from the point of view of his position in the world and his direct relation to others." (Emphasis mine). Nagel, "Subjective and Objective," pp. 203-204. For a similar understanding of the term see Darwall, "Agent-centered Restrictions," pp. 292-299. Samuel Scheffler, on the other hand, gives the term a more general meaning and argues that in order to exclude consequentialism, the notion of agent-centeredness cannot be "taken in the trivial sense of 'being concerned with the conduct of agents.'" Deontology is "agent-centered", in that, the rightness of an act is not contingent upon its bringing about the best state of affairs. Scheffler, "Deontology and the Agent," p. 68. For Nagel, the term "agent-centered" means much more than this; however, he also uses it in this more general sense. Nagel, "Subjective and Objective," pp. 202-205. Consequently, when Nagel uses the term "deontology", this should not be taken to mean Kant's deontology. Kant's deontology only could be called agent-centered in the more general sense. Even though Kant's deontology is agent-centered in this sense, it will be shown that subjectivity defined in terms of character poses a problem for Kant.

values for ethics is that it results in the heterogeneity of morality, in that, ethics is not based solely on impersonal values, but is also concerned independently with what the individual agent should do.[69]

In the realm of ethics, as with other areas of philosophy, Nagel is concerned with the problem of over-objectification and any reductive unification of ethics.

> For the purposes of ethics, should we identify with the detached, impersonal will that chooses total outcomes, and act on reasons that are determined accordingly? Or is this a denial of what we are really doing and an avoidance of the full [emphasis mine] range of reasons that apply to creatures like us? This is a true philosophical dilemma; it arises out of our nature, which includes different points of view [impersonal and personal] on the world. When we ask ourselves how to live, the complexity of what we are makes a unified answer difficult. I believe the human duality of perspectives is too deep for us reasonably to hope to overcome it. A fully agent-neutral morality is not a plausible human goal.[70]

A purely impersonal morality, such as consequentialism, is deemed inadequate because it necessarily "requires the general suppression of the personal perspective in moral motivation."[71] Perspective cannot be eliminated from the realm of ethics anymore than it can be eliminated from the realm of reality.[72] "The good, like the true, includes irreducibly subjective elements," and therefore, ethics should avoid the "temptation to deprive the subjective standpoint of any independent role in the justification of

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[69] Nagel, View, pp. 8; 162-166; 176-177; 183; 185; 187; and Nagel, "Fragmentation," pp. 133; 135-138. For a similar view see Charles Larmore, Patterns of Moral Complexity (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp. 131-150.

[70] Nagel, View, p. 185.

[71] Ibid.

[72] Ibid., p. 187.

action."[73] So for Nagel, deontological restrictions "are among the sources of morality" and "are not themselves to be understood as the expression of neutral values of any kind."[74] In other words, subjectivity in this sense is reflected within morality itself. What is being suggested here is a broader conception of objectivity in relation to ethics inclusive of both consequentialism and deontology.[75]

What are the implications of this broader conception for moral deliberation? For Nagel, this duality of perspective (impersonal and personal) results in a fragmented approach to decision-making, in that,

> ...[we] see both the appeal of agent-neutral, consequentialist ethics and the contrary force of agent relative, deontological ethics. The detached, objective view takes in everything and provides a standpoint of choice from which all choosers can agree about what should happen. But each of us is not only an objective self but a particular person with a particular perspective; we act in the world from that perspective and not only from the point of view of a detached will,

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[73] Ibid., p. 8.

[74] Ibid., pp. 185; 176-177. See also Ibid., p. 166. For recent arguments against the possibility of giving a rationale for deontological restrictions see Kagan, The Limits of Morality, especially chapters 1, 3, and 4; Scheffler, The Rejection of Consequentialism (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), especially chapter 4; and Michael Slote, Common-sense Morality and Consequentialism (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1985), especially chapters 1 and 7. Nagel tries to show the strength of deontological restrictions by giving an example which shows the force of an agent-relative reason not to harm an innocent child, even though it would result in the best state of affairs, impersonally considered. Nagel, View, pp. 176; 182-183. Nagel concedes that this is not really a justification, but rather, a case which illustrates the conflict between two standpoints: the impersonal (which renders agent-neutral reasons) and the personal (which renders agent-relative reasons). See Ibid., pp. 182-183. For a Rawlsian justification of agent-centered restrictions see Darwall, "Agent-centered Restrictions."

[75] Nagel, "Fragmentation," pp. 133-138. With regard to consequentialism and its application see Nagel, "Ruthlessness in Public Life," in Mortal Questions, pp. 75-90. This heterogeneous conception of morality would result in a disjunctive conception of the right.

> selecting and rejecting world-states. So our choices are not merely choices of states of the world, but of actions.[76]

From the impersonal standpoint, actions are viewed in abstraction from the agent's personal perspective and are assessed in terms of their overall value. The question that arises from this standpoint is, "Which action would be best, impersonally considered?" However, from the personal standpoint, actions are assessed on the basis of their particular relation to the agent independent of their overall value. The question from this standpoint is, "Which action should the individual agent do?"[77] According to Nagel, each standpoint plays an independent role in the justification of action.[78] Moreover, neither standpoint has overriding authority in cases of conflict, nor can they be integrated;[79] rather, the objective and subjective points of view coexist and "must cooperate as well as they can in determining what we do."[80]

Now that the basic structure of Nagel's work has been unfolded, the individual agent involved in moral deliberation can be situated within his overall framework. Turning to the individual agent, the question now is, "At what level of objectivity does

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[76] Nagel, View, p. 183. See also Nagel, "Fragmentation," pp. 133; 136.

[77] Nagel, "Fragmentation," p. 133; Nagel, "Subjective and Objective," p. 205; and Nagel, View, pp. 183; 189.

[78] Nagel acknowledges the difficulty in offering a rationale for deontological restrictions, and as a result he is unsure about the role they play in the justification of actions, especially when they conflict with what is impersonally best. Nagel, View, pp. 180-183.

[79] Nagel, View, pp. 6; 8; 176-185; Nagel, "Fragmentation," p. 134; and Nagel, "Subjective and Objective," pp. 205-206.

[80] Nagel, "Fragmentation," p. 138.

moral deliberation occur?" To briefly reiterate, in order to attain a greater conception of objective reality, the transcendence of an individual's type or species is requisite. In other words, reality must be viewed, not from the point of view of a particular individual, nor from a specifically human point of view, but from nowhere in particular: this being the highest level of objectivity. As for morality, only a partial process of objectification is required, in that, transcendence of a specifically human point of view is not necessary. What is necessary is the transcendence of any particular (human) perspective existing in a certain place and at a certain time. Moral deliberation, however, does not occur at the highest level of objectivity, nor does it occur at the intersubjective level. Rather, it occurs at the lowest level, the level of the individual agent who has a particular constitution, position, and relation to the world: a view from here and now.[81] So when Nagel speaks of the standpoint of morality, this should not be equated with moral deliberation, since the discovery of values occurs at the level of intersubjectivity. Once these values are discovered, they provide the material for moral theory, which in turn is applied at the level of individual agents.

In light of this, the present investigation will be distinguished from that of Nagel's. Nagel's discussion of ethics primarily centers on the inadequacy of consequentialism and how subjectivity in terms of agent-centered deontology (Nagel's conception of it) poses a problem for such a conception of morality. As a result, Nagel argues against a reductionist conception of values, which in turn leads him to posit a heterogeneous conception of morality that comprises both objective (consequentialism)

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[81] Nagel, View, p. 5.

and subjective (deontology) elements. In other words, subjectivity is ineliminable within morality itself.

The present investigation also argues for the ineliminability of subjectivity in moral deliberation: subjectivity not defined in terms of deontology but defined in terms of character; hence, the issue is not between consequentialism and deontology. The problem of subjectivity arises because of the level at which moral deliberation occurs: the level of the individual agent who has a character. It will be shown that subjectivity as defined in terms of character poses a problem for both purely impersonal moral theories (consequentialist and deontological) and those consisting of an impersonal element.[82]

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[82] It will be shown in Chapter Four that subjectivity, defined in terms of character, will pose a problem for Nagel's own heterogeneous conception of morality.

CHAPTER II

REASONS OF AUTONOMY: THE PROBLEM OF INTEGRITY

The primary focus of Chapter One was to situate the individual agent involved in moral deliberation within the structure of Nagel's overall framework. As was stated, the problem of subjectivity arises because of the level of objectivity at which moral deliberation occurs: the level of the individual agent who has particular projects, goals, ideals, commitments, and personal relationships.[1] The purpose of this chapter is threefold: first, to render a general characterization of reasons of autonomy as discussed in the recent literature. For present purposes, reasons of autonomy will not be considered here in terms of being the expression of character so as to later show the

[1] Reasons for action which arise from these particular projects, goals, commitments, ideals, and personal relationships are given the general heading of reasons of autonomy by Nagel. Nagel, View, p. 165. Kagan uses the general heading of interests (not to be taken in the narrow sense of self-interest). Kagan, The Limits of Morality, pp. 3; 233-241. However, the most commonly used heading, and one that has been introduced by Bernard Williams in one of his earlier works, is projects. J.J.C. Smart and Bernard Williams, Utilitarianism: For and Against (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), pp. 110-111. In the same work, Williams singles out those projects which are more serious and equates them with commitments. Ibid., p. 116. In a later work, these are called ground projects. Williams, "Persons, Character and Morality," in Moral Luck (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), pp. 12-13. Because of the inconsistent usage of the term by Williams, the general heading of reasons of autonomy has been chosen in order to allow for degrees of importance. Since others have followed Williams in using the term "projects", its usage in the present investigation cannot be avoided. However, the sense in which the term is being used will be specified when necessary. Also, it is important not to confuse reasons of autonomy with Kant's meaning of an autonomous will.

significance and implications of what it means to have a character. Second, to set forth the problem reasons of autonomy poses for act-consequentialist theories.[2] Third, to present and assess some recent proposals which have been put forward in response to the problem.[3]

Reasons of Autonomy

In order to gain a clearer understanding of reasons of autonomy, this discussion will begin with Nagel's own characterization of them in terms of elucidating what type of reason they are. As we have seen, Nagel differentiates agent-neutral reasons from agent-relative ones. What makes a reason agent-neutral is that anyone would accept it as a reason from an objective standpoint. It is a reason that is unrelated to any particular individual. An agent-relative reason, on the other hand, is accepted only on the basis of its being related to a particular individual in a certain way, and is not accepted by anyone who considers it from the objective standpoint. That is, it only can be accepted when the perspective of the individual who has it is occupied, not when it is transcended. Like deontological reasons (Nagel's conception of them), reasons of autonomy are agent-relative.[4] Although both are agent-relative, it is important not to equate the two. Reasons of autonomy are agent-relative in the strongest sense because

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[2] In the subsequent chapter, it will be shown that reasons of autonomy considered as expressions of character pose a different kind of problem for act-consequentialist theories.

[3] These proposals will be evaluated in Chapter Four in light of the argument from character.

[4] Nagel, View, p. 165.

the source of these reasons is the agent,[5] whereas deontological reasons are less so since they are demands that apply to everyone. This should not be taken to mean that reasons of autonomy cannot correspond to or cohere with deontological reasons in terms of content. For reasons of autonomy "in a normally socialized individual, have in good part been formed within, and formed by...a commitment to morality."[7] It is

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[5] Nagel, "Subjective and Objective," p. 203; and Nagel, View, p. 175. See also "Fragmentation," pp. 132-134; and "Subjective and Objective," p. 204. Here, Nagel speaks of degrees of relativity among different types of agent-relative reasons. Agent-relative deontological reasons exist at a higher level of objectivity (the level of moral theory), whereas reasons of autonomy exist at the lowest level of objectivity: the level of individual agents.

Nagel, View, pp. 175; 178; 181. It should be noted that, for Nagel, deontological reasons are not agent-relative in the trivial sense of applying to individuals. If this were the case, then all moral theories would be agent-relative. Rather, deontological reasons are agent-relative because of how they are related to individuals. See pp. 22-25 above).

[7] Williams, "Persons, Character and Morality," p. 12. What Williams is referring to in this passage is a commitment to common-sense morality. Cf. Williams, Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1985), pp. 106-107. Here, the term "common-sense morality" is taken to mean our everyday unsystematized moral beliefs, attitudes, and intuitions. In terms of its structure, common-sense morality consists of a "plurality of ultimate and independent grounds of moral obligation which are essentially non-consequentialist." William Langenfus, "Implications of a Self-effacing Consequentialism," The Southern Journal of Philosophy 27 (1989):492 n. 5. See also Smart and Williams, For and Against, pp. 103-104; 131. Common-sense morality in this sense is not itself a moral theory. However, Dale Jamieson points out the inconsistent usage of the term by Slote. Slote uses the term to refer to our everyday moral practices, but he also suggests that common-sense morality is itself a moral theory competing with consequentialism. Jamieson, review of Common-sense Morality and Consequentialism, by Michael Slote, Ethics 98 (October 1987):169. See also Slote, Common-sense, pp. 1; 8; 129-130; 135-136. When Slote speaks of common-sense morality as an alternative moral theory, he means a theory which is based on the pluralistic structure of common-sense morality. Ibid., p. 4. So for Slote, common-sense morality in its unsystematized form is not itself a moral theory. See also Langenfus, "Self-effacing Consequentialism," pp. 480-481; and Derek Parfit, Reasons and Persons (Oxford: The

essential here to recognize the distinction between the level of the individual agent who has reasons of autonomy, and moral theory (deontological or consequentialist) which is to be applied at the level of the individual agent.

Reasons of autonomy vary as to their degree of importance and seriousness to the individual agent. Some are considered quite trivial and are relegated to mere objects of taste or fancies.[8] These may consist of aesthetic, cultural, and intellectual projects and pursuits;[9] however, for some, these pursuits can be "more thoroughgoing and serious."[10] What this indicates, is that the specific content of reasons of autonomy

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Clarendon Press, 1984), pp. 40; 95-113. For an earlier discussion on the systematization of common-sense morality, see Henry Sidgwick, The Method of Ethics, 7th. ed. (London: Macmillan, 1907).

[8] Smart and Williams, For and Against, pp. 110; 113.

[9] Ibid., p. 110.

[10] Ibid., p. 111. See also Harry Frankfurt, "The Importance of What We Care About," Synthese 53 (1982):258. Frankfurt categorizes such pursuits as loyalty to family tradition; the pursuit of mathematical truth; and the devotion to some kind of connoisseurship, as ideals which have "commanding authority" in an individual's life. See also Nagel, "Fragmentation," p. 130; and View, p. 167. For a clear and concise differentiation between projects (or pursuits) and ideals, see Stan Van Hooft, "Obligation, Character, and Commitment," Philosophy 63 (July 1988):353-354. Based on Van Hooft's differentiation, Frankfurt's categorization of certain projects as ideals is problematic, in that, a project concerns an end which an individual can actually achieve, whereas an ideal concerns an end which is "large and overarching." Even though an individual can do things towards this end, the end itself is not achievable. Consequently, the end with which an ideal is concerned cannot be made part of a project. Ibid., pp. 253-254. It should be noted, that based on his differentiation, Van Hooft thinks that Williams' notion of "projects" should not include ideals. This is to misunderstand how Williams normally uses the term. As was stated earlier, Williams uses the term "projects" in a very general sense to include, projects, goals, ideals, commitments, and personal relationships. Smart and Williams, For and Against, pp. 110-111. Under this more general heading, projects (in the strict sense) are listed separately from ideals. See Williams, "Persons, Character and Morality," pp. 4; 5.

will not always determine their degree of importance and significance to the individual agent.

Other reasons of autonomy are considered to be of great importance and significance to the agent and may consist of the following: projects, goals, and commitments concerning oneself and one's own life;[11] commitment to one's family and friends;[12] projects, goals, and commitments concerning various institutions;[13] and causes and ideals such as the abolition of war and the end of injustice.[14]

Because the source of these reasons is the individual agent, it may be believed that reasons of autonomy are basically selfish in content.[15] However, it is evident from the above examples that reasons of autonomy do not concern only the individual and his own life. Although the source is the individual, it is important to understand, that, for the most part, reasons of autonomy are formed within and formed by a commitment

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Therefore, Williams, like Van Hooft, does make a distinction between the two.

[11] Nagel, "Fragmentation," p. 134; and Smart and Williams, For and Against, p. 110.

[12] Nagel, View, pp. 165; 202; and Smart and Williams, For and Against, p. 110.

[13] Smart and Williams, For and Against, pp. 112; 113.

[14] Ibid., pp. 111; 112; 113-114; and Williams, "Persons, Character and Morality," pp. 4; 13.

[15] It may appear that Nagel's own depiction of reasons of autonomy as concerning the individual's "own life" and "ends that are his own," reflects this belief. Nagel, "Fragmentation," p. 134; and Nagel, View, p. 165. However, Nagel also speaks of "close personal ties," "attachments," and "commitments." Nagel, View, pp. 165; 202; 203. This is not an inconsistency, but rather an attempt to show the different kinds of reasons of autonomy an individual may have.

to common-sense morality. Consequently, reasons of autonomy also will concern objects outside the individual[16] and need not be particularly non-moral in nature.

According to Williams,

> Ground projects do not have to be selfish, in the sense that they are just concerned with things for the agent. Nor do they have to be self-centered, in the sense that the creative projects of a Romantic artist could be considered self-centered (where it has to be him, but not for him). They may certainly be altruistic, and in a very evident sense moral, projects; thus he may be working for reform, or justice, or general improvement.[17]

Moreover,

> there may be projects [important reasons of autonomy] which flow from some more general disposition towards human conduct and character, such as a hatred of injustice, or of cruelty, or of killing.[18]

To summarize, several distinctive features of reasons of autonomy have been delineated within this general characterization and are as follows: first, reasons of autonomy are agent-relative, in the sense that the source of these reasons is the individual agent; second, they vary as to their degree of importance to the agent; and third, in terms of content, they concern not only the individual but also things outside the individual which may be either moral or non-moral in nature.[19]

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[16] Smart and Williams, For and Against, pp. 113-114.

[17] Williams, "Persons, Character and Morality," p. 13.

[18] Smart and Williams, For and Against, p. 111.

[19] Even though a distinction is being made between moral and non-moral reasons of autonomy in terms of their content, there is no definite commitment here as to which ones are essentially moral or non-moral.

Reasons of Autonomy and Act-consequentialism

This section, first, will consist of a general characterization of consequentialism. The proposals that have been put forward in response to the problem reasons of autonomy pose for consequentialism only consider act-consequentialist theories and how the problem relates specifically to this type of consequentialism.[20] Because of this, for present purposes, only act-consequentialism will be considered.[21] Second, the problem reasons of autonomy pose for consequentialist theories will be set forth. Third, consequentialist attempts to accomodate the problem will be presented and assessed.

Generally characterized, a consequentialist criterion of right action holds that the rightness of an act is judged by the state of affairs (consequences, outcomes) it

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[20] The problem equally applies to possible (versus actual) rule-consequentialism which is the view that allows any exception (which is justified on consequentialist grounds) to the rule to be included into the rule itself as a qualification or further specification of it. This further specification of the rule preserves the structure of rule-consequentialism, since the exception is not an exception to the rule, but rather, an exception which is included within the rule itself. Consequently, the rightness of an act is still determined by its adherence to a rule. However, since an adequate possible rule-consequentialism would allow every exception to be included within the rule itself, thus allowing unlimited specificity, it would be equivalent to act-consequentialism, in that, it would enjoin the same actions. On the lack of distinction between the two kinds of consequentialism see Richard M. Hare, Freedom and Reason (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963), pp. 131-136; David Lyons, The Forms and Limits of Utilitarianism (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965); and Smart and Williams, For and Against, pp. 9-12.

[21] It should be noted, that what is of concern here is not act-consequentialism considered strictly as a standard or criterion of right action, but rather, act-consequentialism considered as a decision-making procedure for individuals and not for social/political choice. Because only act versions of consequentialism will be considered, for the sake of brevity the terms "consequentialism" and "consequentialist" will be used and are to be understood as referring to "act" versions.

produces in terms of the good, and that any given act is right if and only if the resulting state of affairs (including the state of affairs produced by performing the act itself) are at least as good as the state of affairs produced by each alternative act available (i.e., the possibility of performing the act) to the agent. States of affairs are impersonally or objectively ranked from best to worst according to their goodness. What is meant here by impersonal is that the ranking of states of affairs is not agent-relative but agent-neutral, in that, the value of a state of affairs is not dependent on any relation to the individual agent.[22] In other words, states of affairs are ranked according to their value impersonally considered and not according to their value for an individual agent. After states of affairs have been ranked, consequentialism requires the agent to perform the act that results in the best or highest ranked (in terms of expected not actual value) state of affairs impersonally considered; thus, the right act must be optimific in the sense of maximizing goodness.

In terms of how states of affairs are to be ranked, consequentialist theories differ as to their conception of the good, or what values may count as possessing intrinsic worth. Utilitarianism is one type of consequentialism which holds happiness (pleasure) or preference-satisfaction[23] to be the sole good that has intrinsic value. So

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[22] Nagel, in contrasting deontology (his version) and consequentialism, vividly illustrates the purely impersonal character of the latter. Nagel, View, pp. 175-184.

[23] According to Scheffler, happiness and preference-satisfaction are not to be equated, since the former represents the hedonistic version of utilitarianism in the sense that happiness refers to some sort of feeling or pleasurable state of consciousness, whereas the latter represents the non-hedonistic version in the sense that preference-satisfaction has to do with what individuals want, prefer, and desire rather than what they feel. Scheffler, The Rejection of Consequentialism, p. 3 n. 4. Both of

states of affairs are ranked according to the amount of good produced, and the right action is one that produces the highest ranked state of affairs in terms of maximizing happiness or preference-satisfaction or other values (not dependent on the subjective states of agents) that enhance welfare. Other types of consequentialist theories do not hold to the view that only happiness or preference-satisfaction is the sole good that has intrinsic worth, or that only welfare is the sole determination of value. Rather, they also count other values such as knowledge, justice, truth, etc., as possessing intrinsic worth independent of subjective or objective conceptions of welfare and are thus consequentialist but not utilitarian. Even though consequentialist theories differ as to their conception of the good, they all share the same criterion of right action and require an agent always to perform the act which produces the best state of affairs impersonally considered.

The objection that is levied against consequentialism is that it demands too much--thus violating the integrity of the individual agent--by not taking account of the independence of the subjective or personal point of view. This objection is different from and should not be confused with the widely discussed problem that

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these traditional versions of utilitarianism are subjective in that their conceptions of the good depend on the subjective states of agents in the sense of what makes them happy or what they prefer. Objective versions, on the other hand, consist of conceptions of the good--those strictly having to do with welfare--whose value is independent of subjective states. For more on this distinction, see for example, David Brink, "Utilitarian Morality and the Personal Point of View," Journal of Philosophy 88 (August 1986):417-438; Richard Kraut, "Two Conceptions of Happiness," Philosophical Review 88 (April 1979):167-197; and T. M. Scanlon, "Preference and Urgency," Journal of Philosophy 72 (November 1975): 655-669. Utilitarianism can be understood here either subjectively, in its hedonistic or non-hedonistic form, or, objectively.

consequentialism permits too much in allowing sacrifices to be made by some for the sake of others. The focus is not on others as victims of injustice and their integrity but on the individual agent's integrity.[24]

> The objection from integrity arises
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> in response to the discrepancy between the way in which concerns and commitments are naturally generated from a person's point of view quite independently of the weight of those concerns in an impersonal ranking of overall states of affairs, and the way in which utilitarianism requires the agent to treat the concerns generated from his point of view as altogether dependent for their moral significance on their weight in such a ranking.[25]

The independence of the subjective point of view is based on the importance of reasons of autonomy to the agent, in that, they have an importance disproportionate to their weight or value when assessed from an impersonal standpoint, thus remaining "active in their own right even though they have been taken into account."[26] The discrepancy

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[24] This shift in emphasis has been and should be attributed to Williams. See Smart and Williams, For and Against, pp. 93-118. In addition, the objection from integrity, which is also a problem of subjectivity but distinct from the problem of subjectivity to be delineated in Chapter Four, is commonly attributed to Williams as well. For this interpretation, see for example Brink, "Utilitarian Morality and the Personal Point of View," pp. 423-424; 435-438; Nancy Davis, "Utilitarianism and Responsibility," Ratio 22 (1980):22-23; D.P. Dryer, "Utilitarianism, For and Against," Canadian Journal of Philosophy 4 (March 1975):555-556; and Nagel, View, pp. 189-193. For a slightly different version of this interpretation see Scheffler, The Rejection of Consequentialism, p. 8. Since this particular problem of subjectivity is not the one Williams is delineating, he will not be considered within this discussion. Those who interpret Williams in this way do not see the deeper problem that he seems to be addressing.

[25] Scheffler, The Rejection of Consequentialism, p. 9.

[26] Nagel, View, p. 201. See also Scheffler, The Rejection of Consequentialism, pp. 9; 57; and Nagel, "Subjective and Objective," p. 203. For Nagel, agent-relative reasons of autonomy are not only independent because of their disproportionate importance, but also because they reflect an independent source--the agent--and are therefore not reducible to agent-neutral ones. Nagel, "Fragmentation," pp. 131-133.

between the independence of the subjective point of view and utilitarianism occurs because of the utilitarian conception of the right which requires an agent always to perform the act which produces the best state of affairs impersonally considered. As a result of this conception, the agent is allowed to pursue his reasons of autonomy only when doing so would produce the best state of affairs;[27] otherwise, the agent must be willing to abandon them--regardless of their disproportionate importance--whenever such abandonment would be productive of the best state of affairs.[28]

> Utilitarianism thus requires the agent to allocate energy and attention to the projects and people he cares most about in strict proportion to the value from an impersonal standpoint of his doing so....[29] [It] requires each person always to act as if he had no further concern for his projects and plans once the impersonal assessment was in. It singles out the impersonal calculus as identifying the right course of action for the individual no matter how his own projects and plans may have fared at the hands of that calculus, and despite the fact that from the impersonal standpoint his own deepest concerns and commitments have no distinctive claim to attention.[30]

This conception of the right systematically violates integrity because of what it directly requires the agent to do and "holds the agent's ability to permissibly pursue his own

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[27] Such an impersonal justification "does not permit reasons for action to end with a reference to what you want or are devoted to." Nagel, "Subjective and Objective," p. 203. See also Nagel, View, pp. 152-155.

[28] Langenfus, "Consequentialism in Search of a Conscience," American Philosophical Quarterly 27 (April 1990):133; and Nagel View, p. 196.

[29] All consequentialist theories share the same conception of the right which entails the strict proportionality feature. Because the objection from integrity is based on this feature, it is more inclusive and applies to consequentialism in general, not just utilitarianism. Scheffler, The Rejection of Consequentialism, pp. 9-10.

[30] Ibid., pp. 9; 57. See also Nagel, "Subjective and Objective," p. 203.

projects and plans unacceptably hostage to the state of the world viewed from an impersonal standpoint."[31]

Can consequentialism[32] reflect the importance of personal integrity and hence reflect the independence of the subjective point of view? As was noted, consequentialist theories differ as to their conception of the good and how states of affairs are to be ranked. A consequentialist theory can admit the importance of personal integrity and accommodate this fact within an impersonal framework. If the possession, pursuit, and successful carrying out of reasons of autonomy are constitutive of personal integrity, and if personal integrity is an important aspect of human fulfillment which enhances the welfare of individuals, then a consequentialist theory can reflect this fact by counting integrity as part of its conception of the good.[33]

As part of a consequentialist conception of the good, how is integrity specifically to be incorporated? Is it to be considered as one good among others given equal weight? If it is given equal weight, then its importance will not be sufficiently

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[31] Scheffler, The Rejection of Consequentialism, p. 10. See also Ibid., pp. 38-39; George W. Harris, "Integrity and Agent Centered Restictions," Nous 23 (1989):439-441; Langenfus, "Conscience," pp. 133-134; and Nagel, View, pp. 189-190.

[32] Again, only act versions are under consideration.

[33] This value could be accommodated either within an objective version of utilitarianism or a consequentialism which also consists of values which are independent of conceptions of welfare. For an example of the former version, see Brink, "Utilitarian Morality and the Personal Point of View," pp. 430-431. Even though Brink speaks in terms of the value of autonomy, the notion of integrity discussed here entails the notion of autonomy, in that, autonomy is manifested by the possession, pursuit, and fulfillment of reasons of autonomy which is constitutive of personal integrity.

reflected, since as one good or value among others integrity will be frequently overridden when this is necessary to promote value overall. This is not the only way, however, in which integrity as a value can be incorporated within a consequentialist framework. A plurality of values can be given a lexical or serial ordering[34] in which they are ranked and satisfied according to their importance. So a value is not taken into consideration until those that are prior to it are fully satisfied (when applicable). The importance of integrity can be reflected within such an ordering by making it prior to all other values. Although this is one way in which its importance can be reflected, a consequentialist theory need not use a lexical ranking but may attribute weights to each value, assigning integrity more weight in the impersonal assessment.[35] Whether a consequentialist theory gives a lexical ordering of values or assigns weights to each, both strategies can reflect the importance of integrity by counting it as a dominant good among others.

Even though consequentialism can reflect the importance of integrity and hence the significance reasons of autonomy have for agents, does it avoid the charge that consequentialism demands too much of the individual agent--thereby violating her integrity--by not taking account of the independence of her point of view? As was

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[34] For a more detailed discussion and example of this type of ordering, see John Rawls, A Theory of Justice (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1971), pp. 40-45.

[35] It is unclear which of the two strategies Brink is espousing when he claims that autonomy is a dominant good which "will trump other less important intrinsic...goods." Brink, "Utilitarian Morality and the Personal Point of View," p. 430.

noted, all consequentialist theories rank states of affairs from best to worst according to their value or goodness from an impersonal standpoint and not according to their value for an individual agent. And so consequentialist theories that count integrity as a dominant good among others, rank states of affairs primarily by the amount of integrity they produce overall and not by the amount they produce for the individual agent. Moreover, the agent's integrity cannot be attributed greater value than that of others in the impersonal assessment of states of affairs just because it is her integrity being considered. After states of affairs have been impersonally ranked, the agent is required to perform the act which produces the best state of affairs. As a result, if sacrificing her reasons of autonomy would be productive of the best state of affairs in the sense of maximizing integrity overall, then this is what the agent is required to do. It should be noted here, that since consequentialism recognizes the significance of possessing and pursuing reasons of autonomy, the cost of such abandonment to the individual agent also is factored into the impersonal assessment of states of affairs. Furthermore, consequentialism "is not blind to the existence of a consideration which supports avoiding the sacrifice."[36] Yet, because of the consequentialist conception of the right (and not because of its conception of the good), the sacrifice can be avoided only if this will be productive of the best state of affairs; otherwise, the agent is required to abandon her reasons of autonomy--the cost notwithstanding--if this is productive of the best state of affairs.

> [A]lthough the hardship to this agent may have been 'taken account of' from an impersonal standpoint, that is unlikely to exhaust his own feeling about the matter.

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[36] Kagan, The Limits of Morality, p. 354.

> But provided that this feeling has itself been assigned a 'cost' which has been fed into the impersonal calculus, it has no further moral relevance....This highlights a notable feature of the strategy: its insistence that the moral significance of a personal point of view, with its accompanying commitments and concerns, is entirely exhausted by the weight that point of view carries in the impersonal calculus, even for the person who has the point of view. Thus...consequentialism ...denies that personal projects and commitments can have...any role in determining what the agent may do independently of the weight those projects and commitments have in the impersonal calculus.[37]

Again, this conception of the right, which is shared by all consequentialist theories, requires the agent to devote energy and attention to reasons of autonomy in strict proportion to their value impersonally considered, despite their importance to the agent which is disproportionate to and therefore independent of their value when assessed from an impersonal standpoint. So even though a sophisticated consequentialism can reflect the importance of integrity by counting it as a dominant good, it does so at a less basic level, in that, it does not reflect the importance of the agent's own integrity. And it is the individual agent's integrity and not the integrity of others that is the essential point of the objection. Consequently, by not taking account of the independence of the subjective point of view at a more fundamental level, consequentialism does not avoid the objection that it violates the individual agent's integrity.[38]

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[37] Scheffler, The Rejection of Consequentialism, p. 61.

[38] Scheffler considers a more sophisticated consequentialism which incorporates a distributive-sensitive principle. The Rejection of Consequentialism, pp. 58-60. This version is not concerned solely with the amount of integrity produced, but also with the number of individuals successfully pursuing their reasons of autonomy. Oddly enough, Scheffler leaves it open as to whether this version adequately responds to the objection from integrity. Ibid., pp. 62-65. Since this distributive-sensitive version shares the same consequentialist conception of the right (which entails the strict proportionality feature), it does not fare any better in meeting the objection, in that, it will require the

Proposed Solutions

In the previous section the problem reasons of autonomy pose for consequentialism was delineated and consequentialist attempts to accomodate the problem were shown to be inadequate. In this section, proposals that have been put forward in response to the problem will be presented and assessed.[39]

Satisficing Consequentialism: Slote

Slote's purpose is to show that the objection from integrity can be

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agent to abandon his reasons of autonomy if this will maximize the number of people successfully pursuing their reasons of autonomy; thus, it too only can reflect the importance of integrity at a less fundamental level.

[39] The purpose of this section is not to give an exhaustive rendering of all the possible responses that could be given in relation to the objection from integrity. It should be noted, however, that there are consequentialist views that do mitigate the problem: views which either have been put forward in direct response to the objection or which have not been offered as a direct response but which also can be offered as possible solutions. Some examples of these alternative responses are Richard B. Brandt, "Some Merits of One Form of Rule Utilitarianism," in Mill: Utilitarianism with Critical Essays, ed. Samuel Gorovitz (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Co., Inc., 1971), pp. 324-344; Rawls, "Two Concepts of Rules," Philosophical Review 64 (January 1955):3-32; and Stephen Toulmin, An Examination of the Place of Reason in Ethics (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1950). Brandt's view is an example of ideal rule-consequentialism and Rawls and Toulmin are both examples of actual rule-consequentialism. Brandt, Rawls, and Toulmin are responding to the classic problem of justice. See also Brink, "Utilitarian Morality and the Personal Point of View." Brink directly responds to the objection from integrity. Ibid., pp. 423-424; 427; 435. See also Hare, Moral Thinking (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981). In general, Hare is responding to the problem of justice but is also responding to other problems levied against act-consequentialism. Ibid., pp. 36-38; 44-52; and Igor Primorac, "Hare on Moral Conflicts," Analysis 45 (1985):171-175. See also Peter Railton, "Alienation, Consequentialism, and the Demands of Morality," Philosophy and Public Affairs 13 (1984). Railton is responding to the problem consequentialism has with impersonal motivation with regard to personal matters such as love and friendship. Brink, Hare, and Railton are examples of dual-level act-consequentialism.

accommodated within a purely consequentialist framework.[40] He begins his discussion by analyzing the standard "unitary moral conception"[41] of consequentialism which can be stated as follows: the rightness of an act is judged by the state of affairs it produces in terms of the good, and any given act is right if it produces the best or highest ranked state of affairs.[42] According to Slote, this conception is not unitary since it entails two separate claims. The first claim is that the rightness of an act is judged by the state of affairs it produces, and the second claim is that the rightness of an act depends on its having the best state of affairs. Slote goes on to question why these two claims should necessarily go together since the first claim is separable from the second (although the second is not separable from the first and entails it). Because the first claim does not entail the second, Slote asks why an act cannot "qualify as morally right through having [impersonally] good enough consequences, even though better consequences could have been produced?"[43]

For Slote, optimizing forms are not the only feasible options for consequentialism. "Satisficing" forms of consequentialism,[44] like optimizing forms,

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[40] Slote, Common-sense, pp. 35; 53.

[41] Ibid., p. 36.

[42] Slote calls this standard conception "optimizing consequentialism." Ibid., p. 37.

[43] Ibid., p. 36.

[44] To show the coherence and feasibility of moral satisficing, Slote first considers the notion of rational satisficing (Ibid., pp. 38-44) which is discussed in the economics literature. See for example, H. A. Simon, "A Behavioral Model of Rational Choice," Quarterly Journal of Economics 69 (1955):99-118; Simon, "Theories of Decision

judge the rightness of an act exclusively by the state of affairs it produces,[45] but count as right an action which produces states of affairs which are good enough in relation to the best state of affairs that could be produced. What Slote is suggesting here is a broader conception of the notion of consequentialism which would allow it to be defined in terms of optimal or non-optimal states of affairs.[46]

> [The] standard view that rightness depends on whether the consequences are the best producible in the circumstances will then...be seen as a particular kind of consequentialism, rather than as constituting consequentialism per se. And it will be natural to characterize this particular kind of consequentialism as 'optimizing consequentialism' since it holds that rightness depends on whether consequences are good enough and that only the best is good enough. By contrast, the new sort of consequentialist view...might appropriately be labelled 'satisficing consequentialism'.[47]

For Slote, these are "incompatible moral-theoretic options"[48] in the sense that they do not share the same conception of the right (however, they may share the same conception of the good) and what they require of agents. Optimizing consequentialism

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Making in Economics and Behavioral Science," American Economic Review 49 (1959):253-283; Simon, Administrative Behavior, 3rd ed. (New York: The Free Press, 1976). Slote then discusses a satisficing aspect of common-sense moral theory with regard to the notion of benevolence. Slote, Common-sense, pp. 45-48. Slote points out that common-sense moral theory regards beneficent acts as right even though they do not produce the best state of affairs but only produce what is good enough in terms of beneficence.

[45] Ibid., pp. 3; 36. Because satisficing consequentialism is analogous to optimizing forms in this way, Slote thinks it is "terminologically natural" to treat it as a particular form or type of consequentialism. Ibid., p. 36. See also Ibid., p. 143 n. 3.

[46] Ibid., p. 36.

[47] Ibid., p. 37. Even though Slote is the only one to explicitly suggest this as "a distinct conceptual and moral possibility," (Ibid., p. 3) he mentions Bentham, Sidgwick, and others as implicitly suggesting the idea of satisficing.

[48] Ibid., p. 60.

requires an agent always to perform the act which produces the best state of affairs impersonally considered, whereas satisficing consequentialism requires an agent to perform the act which produces states of affairs which are (impersonally) good enough.[49]

The question that naturally arises is, "What counts as good enough and how is this to be determined?" According to Slote, this must be determined comparatively in each case,[50] meaning what is good enough will "depend on what else [is] available."[51] More specifically, in order to determine whether an action is good enough, it must be compared to all the other alternative actions in relation to the best action that could be performed. The procedure by which to determine this can be set forth as follows: first, enumerate all the possible alternative actions available; second, evaluate the alternative actions in terms of the states of affairs they produce and then rank them from best to worst according to their goodness;[52] third, choose the act which produces more good

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[49] If an agent performs an act which produces more good (perhaps the best state of affairs), "then he does better than...satisficing...consequentialism requires and acts supererogatorily." Ibid., p. 53.

[50] See Slote's criticism of Bentham's non-comparative form of satisficing consequentialism. Ibid., pp. 49-50. For Slote, the only "plausible, interesting, [and] viable alternative" to optimizing consequentialism is some form of comparative satisficing consequentialism. Ibid., p. 51.

[51] Ibid., p. 50.

[52] Ibid., pp. 50-51. Thus far, the process is identical to the one which is required by optimizing consequentialism for the purpose of determining which action produces the best state of affairs. Ibid., p. 51.

than all the other alternative actions in relation to the best action that could be performed.[53]

Does Slote's version of satisficing consequentialism avoid the objection from integrity? Slote maintains that satisficing consequentialism allows "greater scope" for the pursuit of reasons of autonomy than optimizing forms.[54] One example he offers to illustrate his point concerns a physician who is very much affected by the sick and malnourished in India and who wants to volunteer his medical services. Optimizing consequentialism would allow him to volunteer only if this would produce the best state of affairs; otherwise, he must be willing to abandon his plan if this would produce the

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[53] Even though there are passages which seem to indicate that Slote is espousing such a strong version of satisficing consequentialism (Ibid., pp. 50; 52), it is not completely clear. What is clear, however, is that he does not support a weak version of satisficing consequentialism which would allow an agent to perform an act which did not produce very much good, even though the agent could have performed an act which produced more good. Ibid., p. 54. Slote describes the weak version as being closer to common-sense moral theory and what it would allow. Philip Petitt, in response to Slote's view, argues that the procedure Slote describes for determining what action is good enough is not that of a satisficing view as traditionally understood but that of a "submaximizing" view. Pettit, "Satisficing Consequentialism," in The Aristotelian Society: Proceedings of the Symposia in Oxford, England, July 1984, by the Aristotelian Society and the Mind Association (England: University of Oxford, 1984), 174-176. This article is in response to an earlier version of what is now chapter 3 in Slote's book. See also Petitt, "Slote on Consequentialism," Philosophical Quarterly 36 (July 1986):402-403. Slote admits that he is extending the notion of satisficing beyond its normal usage in the economics literature. Slote, Common-sense, pp. 41-42; 46. With regard to the rationality of explicitly rejecting the best for the good enough, see Jamieson, review of Common-sense Morality and Consequentialism, p. 170; Petitt, "Satisficing Consequentialism," pp. 165-176; and Petitt, "Slote on Consequentialism," pp. 401-404.

[54] Slote, Common-sense, p. 54.

best state of affairs.[55] Satisficing consequentialism, on the other hand, does not require an agent to perform the act which produces the best state of affairs impersonally considered, but rather, it requires an agent to perform the act which produces states of affairs which are impersonally good enough. In the case of the physician, satisficing consequentialism would allow him to work in India even though he could produce more good by abandoning his plan, as long as the amount of good produced is considered good enough.[56]

Even though satisficing consequentialism does not share the same conception of the right as optimizing forms, in the sense that it does not require the agent always to perform the act which produces the best state of affairs, it does, however, share a different aspect of that conception: the strict proportionality feature. As was shown, the objection from integrity as levied against optimizing consequentialism is based on the strict proportionality feature and arises in response to the discrepancy between the importance reasons of autonomy have for the agent--an importance which is disproportionate to their value when assessed from an impersonal standpoint--and the way in which consequentialism requires the agent to treat the importance of reasons of autonomy, that is, in strict proportion to their value as assessed from an impersonal standpoint. The discrepancy also occurs with satisficing consequentialism because of its conception of the right which requires an agent always to perform the act which produces states of affairs which are impersonally good enough. As a result of this

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[55] Ibid., pp. 51-52.

[56] Ibid., p. 54.

conception, the agent is allowed to pursue her reasons of autonomy only when doing so would produce states of affairs which are impersonally good enough; otherwise, the agent must be willing to abandon them--regardless of their disproportionate importance --whenever such abandonment would produce states of affairs which are good enough. Like optimizing forms, satisficing consequentialism is an impersonal moral theory in that it ranks states of affairs from best to worst according to their value impersonally considered and not according to their value for an individual agent. After states of affairs have been ranked, the agent is required to perform the act which is good enough impersonally considered. Consequently, like optimizing forms, this conception of the right requires the agent to devote energy and attention to his reasons of autonomy in strict proportion to their value as assessed from an impersonal standpoint, notwithstanding their importance which is disproportionate to and therefore independent of their value impersonally considered. So even though less is required in terms of the amount of good produced, satisficing consequentialism does not allow the subjective point of view any role in determining what the agent may do independently of its value impersonally considered.[57] By not reflecting the independence of the subjective point

[57] This would also apply to a weaker version of satisficing consequentialism, which, compared to Slote's version, would allow less good to be produced. Although less would be required in terms of the amount of impersonal good produced, this conception of the right also entails the strict proportionality feature, in that, the agent would be allowed to pursue his reasons of autonomy only when doing so would produce states of affairs which are impersonally good enough (in this weaker sense); otherwise, the agent must be willing to abandon them whenever this would produce states of affairs which are good enough, despite their disproportionate importance.

subjective point of view at a more fundamental level, satisficing consequentialism may systematically violates the integrity of the individual agent.

The Notion of an Agent-centered Permission:[58]

Nagel and Scheffler

In contrast to the above consequentialist attempts to accommodate the objection from integrity, Nagel and Scheffler do not try to accommodate the problem within a purely consequentialist framework,[59] but rather, propose the notion of an agent-centered permission.[60] In general terms, an agent-centered permission would allow

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[58] It should be noted that the term "permission" is used by Nagel. Scheffler, however, uses the term "prerogative" and Kagan has recently introduced the term "option". Nagel, "Subjective and Objective," p. 203; Scheffler, The Rejection of Consequentialism, p. 5; and Kagan, The Limits of Morality, p. 3.

[59] Nagel, "Subjective and Objective," pp. 202-203; Nagel, View, pp. 165-166; 174; Scheffler, The Rejection of Consequentialism, pp. 5; 14; and Scheffler, "Deontology and the Agent," p. 69. Scheffler does not mention the consequentialist views listed (p. 47 n. 39 above) as possible solutions to the problem but does mention other types that do seem to meet it as well. Scheffler, The Rejection of Consequentialism, pp. 43-49; 52-53; 54; 63-65. Nagel however does mention Hare and also T. M. Scanlon as possible consequentialist solutions to the problem.

[60] Even though the notion of an agent-centered permission can be incorporated into any impersonal conception of morality (thus changing its purely impersonal nature), both Nagel and Scheffler are concerned with their own conceptions of morality. As we have seen, Nagel advances a heterogeneous conception of morality (see pp. 25-29 above) which consists of an impersonal element. Although this conception is not purely impersonal, "still, the impersonal element in any objective morality will be significant and depending on circumstance may become very demanding: it may overshadow everything else." Nagel, View, 189. See also Nagel, View, p. 205. Scheffler, on the other hand, proposes the notion of an agent-centered permission in order to avoid the objection from integrity in terms of his own consequentialist view.

> agents to devote energy and attention to their projects out of proportion to the weight from an impersonal standpoint of their doing so. Agents would no longer be required always to produce the best overall outcome; each agent would have the prerogative to devote energy and attention to his projects and commitments out of proportion to their weight in the impersonal calculus. Such a prerogative would be a genuinely agent-centered prerogative, for it would have the function of denying that what an agent is permitted to do in every situation is limited strictly to what would have the best overall outcome, impersonally judged.[61]

Basically, an agent-centered permission to pursue one's reasons of autonomy places a limitation on the consequentialist conception of the right which requires an agent always to perform the act which produces the best state of affairs impersonally considered.[62] This limit "is independent of how the comparative impersonal value of outcomes is determined."[63] Although the agent is permitted to pursue his reasons of autonomy independently of an impersonal justification, he is always permitted to

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[61] Scheffler, The Rejection of Consequentialism, pp. 5; 14. See also Nagel, "Subjective and Objective," pp. 202-203; and Nagel, View, p. 174. It should be noted that Scheffler incorporates an agent-centered prerogative into his conception of the right and calls his view and all other moral conceptions that depart from consequentialism so far as to incorporate an agent-centered prerogative, "hybrid theories." Scheffler, "Deontology and the Agent," p. 69; and Scheffler, The Rejection of Consequentialism, pp. 14; 61-62. This is a non-consequentialist view (Ibid., p. 5) which consists of a disjunctive conception of the right, that is, an action is right if it either produces the best state of affairs impersonally considered or preserves the agent's reasons of autonomy in the appropriate way. As previously shown (see pp. 25-29 above), Nagel's own conception of morality results in a disjunctive conception of the right (consisting of consequentialism and deontology), and in contrast to Scheffler he does not incorporate an agent-centered permission into his conception of the right. For Nagel, an agent-centered permission has to do with agent-centered rationality; therefore its incorporation does not result in a new morality. Nagel, View, p. 199.

[62] Nagel, View, pp. 165; 174; and Scheffler, The Rejection of Consequentialism, p. 62.

[63] Nagel, View, p. 174; Scheffler, "Deontology and the Agent," p. 69; and Scheffler, The Rejection of Consequentialism, p. 16 n. 4.

abandon them in order to perform the act which would produce the best state of affairs, that is, the agent is never prohibited from performing such an act.[64]

The agent, however, is not always permitted to pursue her own reasons of autonomy. Both Nagel and Scheffler place limitations on the agent-centered permission itself, which then can be understood as "a dispensation for a certain degree [emphasis mine] of partiality."[65] For Scheffler the restrictions are consequentialist-justified, in that, consequentialist considerations, at some point (undetermined), override the agent-centered permission and limit it. As a result, the agent will sometimes be required (not merely permitted) to perform the act which produces the best state of affairs impersonally considered and, in turn, be required to abandon her reasons of autonomy.[66] For Nagel, the agent-centered permission is not only limited by

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[64] Scheffler, The Rejection of Consequentialism, pp. 5; 21; and Nagel, "Fragmentation," pp. 133-138; Nagel, "Subjective and Objective," pp. 205-206; and Nagel, View, p. 183. Even though Nagel's conception of morality consists of deontological restrictions (Scheffler's conception does not), he does not consider these to be absolute. Nagel, View, p. 185. Nagel's own heterogeneous conception of morality does not allow him to claim that producing the best state of affairs is prohibited. See pp. 25-30 above, especially pp. 28-29 above. Consequently, the agent is permitted to abandon reasons of autonomy in order to adhere to impersonal claims even if what is impersonally best conflicts with deontological restrictions. Nagel, View, pp. 176-183; 185.

[65] Nagel, View, p. 202.

[66] Scheffler, The Rejection of Consequentialism, pp. 18-20. Sarah Conly criticizes Scheffler for introducing a consequentialist-based limitation since Scheffler himself argues for the independence of agent-centered permissions. "If this independence renders the moral value of action from the personal point of view incomparable to other sorts of values, then the balancing recommended in Scheffler's hybrid view is impossible." Conly, review of The Rejection of Consequentialism, by Samuel Scheffler, Philosophical Review 93 (July 1984):491. Kagan is not concerned with the limitation Scheffler places on the agent-centered permission and whether this

only limited by consequentialist considerations, but is also limited by deontological restrictions.[67] As a result, the agent will sometimes be required to abandon her reasons of autonomy because of what is required in terms of consequentialist considerations or because of what is required in terms of deontological restrictions.[68]

Does the notion of an agent-centered permission avoid the objection from integrity? As was shown, consequentialist attempts (including satisficing consequentialism) to accommodate the problem do not reflect the independence of the subjective point of view at the most fundamental level, in that, reasons for action never end with a reference to the individual agent. In other words, they do not allow the subjective point of view any role in determining what the agent may do independently of an impersonal justification. Because of the consequentialist conception of the right, the agent is required to devote energy and attention to her reasons of autonomy in strict proportion to their value as assessed from an impersonal standpoint; therefore it

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maneuver is possible; rather, he is concerned with Scheffler's inability to provide "a rationale for prerogatives that grant only partial moral independence." Kagan, "Does Consequentialism Demand Too Much?" Philosophy and Public Affairs 13 (1984):253. Scheffler himself admits that he has not offered a rationale for such a limitation, thus leaving unanswered the question as to whether a rationale can be identified. Scheffler, The Rejection of Consequentialism, pp. 69-70.

[67] Nagel, View, pp. 200; 204; 165; 175; and Nagel, "Subjective and Objective," p. 203. Similarly, Nagel does not seem to offer a justified rationale for the limitations placed on the agent-centered permission.

[68] Again, because of Nagel's conception of morality, if what is required by consequentialist considerations conflicts with what is required by deontological restrictions, the agent is never prohibited from performing the act which would produce the best state of affairs.

systematically violates the agent's integrity.[69] An agent-centered permission, however, denies that an agent should always produce the best state of affairs impersonally considered and so does not entail the strict proportionality requirement. An agent-centered permission

> would systematically permit people, within certain limits, to devote energy and attention to their projects and commitments even if their doing so would not on balance promote the best outcomes overall....[T]he function of an agent-centered prerogative would be to deny that the permissibility of devoting energy to one's projects and commitments depends on the efficacy of such activity as an instrument of overall benefit.[70]

By permitting the agent to devote energy and attention to her reasons of autonomy out of proportion to their value considered impersonally, an agent-centered permission reflects the independence of the subjective point of view at the most fundamental level and allows reasons of autonomy to play a role in determining what the agent may do apart from what is impersonally justified. Consequently, the notion of an agent-centered permission does meet the objection from integrity.

To conclude, this chapter has considered reasons of autonomy apart from the notion of character and has delineated the problem reasons of autonomy pose for consequentialist theories. It was also shown that consequentialist attempts to reflect the independence of the subjective point of view--by incorporating integrity into its conception of the good--fail to meet the objection because it does not reflect the

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[69] This should not be taken to mean that it necessarily violates the agent's integrity. For as was stated, if pursuing reasons of autonomy produces the best or good enough state of affairs, then the agent is not required to abandon them.

[70] Scheffler, The Rejection of Consequentialism, p. 17.

importance of the agent's own integrity. In addition, proposals which have been advanced in response to the problem were presented and assessed.

CHAPTER III

REASONS OF AUTONOMY AND CHARACTER: AN ACCOUNT OF HUMAN AGENCY

The purpose of Chapter One was to situate the individual agent at the level of objectivity at which moral deliberation occurs: the level of the individual agent who has particular projects, goals, ideals, commitments, and personal relationships (reasons of autonomy). Because moral deliberation occurs at the level of the individual agent who has reasons of autonomy, a particular problem of subjectivity arises for consequentialist theories: the problem of integrity. This problem was delineated in Chapter Two. However, when reasons of autonomy are seen in terms of being the expression of the individual agent's character, a different problem of subjectivity arises: the problem of agency. As will be shown in Chapter Four, this problem arises for certain types of objective moral theories which either require or permit an agent to act either contrary to or apart from her character. By requiring or permitting this, a necessary condition of agency is threatened. The purpose of this chapter is to give an account of human agency by developing the notion of character and showing its relation to agency.

Character[1]

Even though reasons of autonomy are considered apart from the notion of character in Chapter Two, this is where the discussion on character really begins since reasons of autonomy are the expression of an individual agent's character. They are the expression of those values that have been internalized by the agent and which constitute her character:[2] values such as life (the agent's own or life in general), family,

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[1] It should be noted that this will not be an exhaustive treatment of the concept, in that, the acquisition and development of or the process by which character can be changed will not be discussed. The point is that each individual agent has a character. Even though Derek Parfit speaks of "other" or "successive selves" when significant changes of character occur during an individual's life, this does not weaken the notion of character (although it does lessen the psychological connectedness between one's past, present, and future selves) since each self is a self that has a character. In other words, an individual agent has a character at any given time. See Derek Parfit, "On 'The Importance of Self-Identity', The Journal of Philosophy 68 (October 1971):683-690 and Parfit, "Later Selves and Moral Principles," in Philosophy and Personal Relations, ed. Alan Montefiore (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 1973), pp. 137-164. The present investigation is not concerned with future selves, but rather it is concerned with the fact that each individual has a character. It is this fact and its bearing on practical deliberation and conduct that poses a problem for certain types of moral theories.

[2] N.J.H. Dent, The Moral Psychology of the Virtues (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), pp. 12; 90-91; 176-177; J.M. Gustafson, "What Ought I to Do?," Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association 43 (1969):61; Gustafson, Can Ethics Be Christian? (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975), pp. 18; 56-59; Gilbert Meilaender, The Theory and Practice of Virtue (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984), p. 84; and Nussbaum, The Fragility of Goodness (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 306. Craig Dykstra and Charles Taylor speak in terms of the agent's "fundamental convictions" or "fundamental evaluations" respectively--those which are of central importance to the individual--as constituting his character. Dykstra, Vision and Character (New York: Paulist Press, 1981), p. 52; and Taylor, Human Agency and Language (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 34-35. Within the context of speaking about values, Stanley Hauerwas also refers to "basic commitments" as constituting an individual's character. Hauerwas, Character and the Christian Life (Texas: Trinity University Press, 1975), p. 203. He also speaks in terms of the agent having "certain

friendship, power, justice, financial security, racial purity, honesty, pleasure, and so on. These values have meaning for the agent and are something in which she believes and takes seriously, and since they are deeply held, her desires, feelings, and attitudes will be formed in accordance with them.

The sources of these values within one's society will vary[3], and in turn, the content of these values will not necessarily be the same for each individual. And even if the same values are internalized,[4] how they are developed within the agent's life will depend on her own experience and history.[5] So the agent's "resulting character is still uniquely [hers], as much as the character of other members of the society who have interacted more creatively with that society."[6] Furthermore, the number of values or how these values are ranked in terms of preference or priority is also relative to each

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intentions" or "reasons" rather than others; and by having these "and forming [his] actions accordingly...[his] character is at once formed and revealed." Ibid., p. 115. See also Ibid., pp. 202-203.

[3] For a discussion on the sources of values within society and their influence on the individual, see Robert F. Peck, The Psychology of Character Development (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1960), pp. 142-163.

[4] As was stated in Chapter Two, reasons of autonomy in a normally socialized individual are formed within and by a commitment to common-sense morality; that is, a commitment to certain values that a particular society upholds and which the agent has internalized.

[5] Gustafson, "What Ought I to Do?," p. 67; Hauerwas, Character and the Christian Life, p. 106; and Nancy Sherman, The Fabric of Character (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1989), p. 29.

[6] Hauerwas, Vision and Virtue, (Notre Dame: Notre Dame Press, 1974), p. 62.

individual agent.[7] For both Hauerwas and Williams, having a character does not mean that the agent has inculcated a single value (although the possibility of this is not denied). Hauerwas maintains that,

> ...it is obvious that most people's character is not exemplified by an all-consuming aim, but rather it is more or less a consistent set of intentions...variously interrelated in some hierarchy of priority in a way that provides a general orientation.[8]

If there is a hierarchy of priority, this too will depend on the agent's experience and history. Perhaps the agent was a victim of a grave injustice, and as a result, issues of justice are more important than other values and therefore lexically prior.

The issue here, however, is not the source of these values, neither is it the number of values which constitute an agent's character or how these values are prioritized in terms of their importance. Moreover, no one value or set of values, will be given special attention,[9] since the point here is not the content or the concrete

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[7] Gustafson, Can Ethics Be Christian?, pp. 58-59.

[8] Hauerwas, Character and the Christian Life, p. 120. See also Williams, "Persons, Character and Morality," p. 13. Here Williams speaks of a nexus of ground projects. If in most cases an individual's character consists of several different values, then perhaps one can speak in terms of the different aspects of an agent's character.

[9] Recall that this lack of specificity in terms of content is also present in Chapter Two within the discussion of reasons of autonomy. The present discussion is a continuation of that discussion and connects the agent's reasons of autonomy with her values: the values which constitute her character. So the problem of subjectivity that will be delineated in this present work must not be confused with the particularity (partiality) versus impartiality debate which focuses on friendship and compassion/caring and the failure of impartialist conceptions of morality (Kant, Kohlberg, and consequentialism specifically) to account adequately for these values. On this problem see Blum, Friendship, Altruism and Morality (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980); Blum, "Gilligan and Kohlberg: Implications for Moral Theory," Ethics (April 1988); Blum, "Iris Murdoch and the Domain of the Moral," Philosophical Studies 50 (1986); Blum, "Particularity and Responsiveness," in The Emergence of

specification of an agent's character, nor is it to make a normative claim about certain values. Rather, the point is that each individual has a character. And it is this character--the actual determination and qualification of the agent's being[10]--which

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Morality in Young Children, eds. J. Kagan and Sharon Lamb (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), pp. 306-337; Owen J. Flanagan, Jr., and Jonathan E. Adler, "Impartiality and Particularity," Social Research (Fall 1983):576-596; Carol Gilligan, In a Different Voice (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982); and Nell Noddings, Caring: Feminine Approaches to Ethics and Moral Education (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984). For Gilligan and Noddings, compassion and caring are major categories of moral thinking for women. The problem of subjectivity, however, is not a gender problem since it pertains to human agency in general and not male or female agency in particular; thus, it is a more fundamental problem that cuts across gender lines. For Blum, Neera Kapur, Langenfus, Robert C. Solomon, Michael Stocker, and W. H. Wilcox, the problem with impartialist views is that they do not allow the agent to have the proper motivation for actions when it comes to personal relationships of love and friendship. See Blum, Friendship, Altruism, and Morality; Kapur, "Why It Is Wrong to Be Always Guided by the Best: Consequentialism and Friendship," Ethics 101 (April 1991); Langenfus, "Conscience," p. 133; Solomon, "The Virtue of Love," in Midwest Studies in Philosophy, vol. 13: Ethical Theory: Character and Virtue, eds. Peter A. French, Theodore E. Uehling, Jr., and Howard K. Wettstein (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988), pp. 12-31; Stocker, "The Schizophrenia of Modern Ethical Theories," Journal of Philosophy 73 (1976):453-466; and Wilcox, "Egoists, Consequentialists, and Their Friends," Philosophy and Public Affairs 16 (1987)

It should be noted that most of the philosophical literature on character focuses on moral or good character in particular and therefore on specific values. In spite of this focus, which is normative as opposed to metaethical, what is said within these discussions can enlighten one's understanding of character in general and thus one's understanding of human agency. In the Nicomachean Ethics, Aristotle is concerned with the acquisition and development of moral character and thus delineates certain values that should be inculcated as part of the agent's character (values such as courage, 1107b; bk. 3, chs. 6 and 7; generosity, 1107b1; 1107b10; bk. 4, ch. 1; truth, 1108a1; 1108a20; bk. 4, ch. 7; friendship, bk. 8; justice, bk. 5). The account of human agency that will be given in the present chapter is not offered by Aristotle, but rather, this account is assumed by him and is the foundation for his discussion on moral education.

[10] Hauerwas, Character and the Christian Life, pp. 21; 74. For Hauerwas, "character is a concept that denotes what makes us determinative...agents" and "involves the assumption that the self can be determined." Ibid., p. 21. See also Ibid.,

defines his identity and makes him an "identifiable self".[11] According to Taylor,

> ...the concept of identity is bound up with that of certain strong evaluations which are inseparable from myself. [This is because] I identify myself by my strong evaluations, as someone who essentially has these convictions....Short of these we would cease to be ourselves....The notion of identity refers us to certain evaluations which are essential because they are the indispensable horizon or foundation out of which we reflect and evaluate as persons.[12]

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pp. 114; 202; Hauerwas, Vision and Virtue, pp. 55; 58-59; Gustafson, "What Ought I to Do?," p. 63; and L. A. Kosman, "Being Properly Affected," in Essays on Aristotle's Ethics, ed. Amelie Oksenberg Rorty (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), p. 112. Within the context of discussing the acquisition of a good character, Kosman speaks in terms of "self-constitution." It should be noted that Hauerwas is not so much concerned with the fact that the individual agent has a character and what this means, but that he is a self-determining agent and therefore responsible for the character that he does have since "character is the qualification or determination of [his] self-agency." In other words, through the agent's chosen actions character is acquired, and it is in this sense that character is taken to be the determination of self-agency: the result of chosen actions. Hauerwas, Character and the Christian Life, p. 115. See also Ibid., pp. 12; 18-29; 89-113; 114-117. See also Aristotle Nicomachean Ethics bk. 3, ch. 5 and with this see Kosman, "Being Properly Affected," pp. 109-113. See also Michele Moody-Adams, "On the Old Saw that Character is Destiny," in Identity, Character, and Morality, eds. Owen Flanagan and Amelie Oksenberg Rorty (Massachusetts: MIT press, 1990), pp. 111-131; and Walter Nicgorski and Fredrick E. Ellrod, "Moral Character," in Act and Agent, eds. Fredrick E. Ellrod, George McLean, Jesse A. Mann, and David L. Schindler (Lanham: University Press of America, 1986), pp. 151-157. For a contrasting view, see Joel L. Kupperman, Character (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), pp. 47-64. This latter issue concerns how character is acquired and also how changes of character occur. Again, the issue here is not the acquisition of character or the process by which it can be changed. Rather, the focus is on the individual who has a character: a determinative agent.

[11] Gustafson, "What Ought I to Do?," pp. 61; 63. See also Jonathan Jacobs, "Moral Imagination, Objectivity, and Practical Wisdom," International Philosophical Quarterly 31 (March 1991):33. For Jacobs, it is an individual's identification with certain values that forms his "self-conception."

[12] Taylor, Human Agency and Language, pp. 34; 35. See also Dykstra, Vision and Character, p. 52; Hauerwas, Character and the Christian Life, p. 203; Smart and Williams, For and Against, p. 116; and Williams, "Persons, Character and Morality," pp. 6; 14.

For Hauerwas, character "is the mode of the formation of our 'I,' for it is character that provides the content of that 'I.'"[13] It is what makes the individual agent the individual he is and it is what makes "another individual the individual he is."[14]

Character and the Notion of Vision

In his work, The Structure of Scientific Revolutions, Thomas Kuhn uses the notion of vision within his discussion of scientific paradigms. Defined in general terms, a paradigm "stands for the entire constellation of beliefs, values, techniques, and so on shared by the members of a given [scientific] community."[15] A paradigm is the foundation for science and so defines science and gives it its identity, and because of this, it supplies the foundation for normal science which further articulates the paradigm itself. In other words, normal science, which presupposes a paradigm, is practiced in light of it.[16] Ptolemaic astronomy, Copernican astronomy, and Newtonian dynamics are examples of paradigms and thus examples of how science has been

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[13] Hauerwas, Character and the Christian Life, p. 203. See also Dykstra, Vision and Character, p. 52. For Dykstra, "our convictions tell us who we are."

[14] Nussbaum, Fragility, p. 357. This is said within the context of discussing the notion of friendship and our relationship with others. See also Williams, "Persons, Character and Morality," pp. 14-16. Here Williams is concerned with the point that different individuals have different characters--different identities. He incorporates this in his discussion on friendship in order to point out, that because we are different, individuals are not interchangeable.

[15] Thomas S. Kuhn, The Structure of Scientific Revolutions, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), p. 175.

[16] Ibid., pp. 10; 23-43.

defined and how normal science was practiced.[17] The notion of vision is used to describe what it means to practice normal science in light of a particular paradigm, since the kind of world the scientist will see is determined by the paradigm itself, meaning his vision of the world and how observations and data are interpreted are paradigm-dependent.[18] So the scientist's perception of the world involves constructive activity and is not simply a matter of passive receptivity to the environment. For example, Galileo saw a swinging pendulum as an object with inertia which almost repeats its oscillating motion. His predecessors, inheriting the Aristotelian interest in progress towards final ends, had seen a pendulum as a constrained falling object which slowly attains its final state of rest.[19] Because the scientist's vision of the world is paradigm-dependent, a change of paradigm results in viewing the world differently. In speaking about a paradigm change, or, as Kuhn calls it, a "scientific revolution" and the normal-scientific tradition that emerges from it, Kuhn says that

> the reception of a new paradigm often necessitates a redefinition of the corresponding science....The normal-scientific tradition that emerges from a scientific revolution is not only incompatible but often actually incommensurable with that which has gone before....[W]hen paradigms change, the world itself changes with them....[P]aradigm changes do cause scientists to see the world of their research-engagement differently. In so far as their only recourse to that world is through what they see and do, we may want to say that after a revolution scientists are responding to a different world....Therefore at times of revolution, when the normal-scientific tradition changes, the scientist's perception of his environment must be re-educated--in some familiar situations he must learn to see

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[17] Ibid., p. 10.

[18] Ibid., pp. 23-34; 122; 126.

[19] Ibid., pp. 118-20; 123-125.

a new gestalt.[20]

As was stated, the purpose of this chapter is to give an account of human agency by developing the concept of character and showing its relation to agency. In light of this purpose, Kuhn's use of the notion of vision is useful, not, however, in relation to scientific paradigms, but rather in relation to the agent's internalized values, that is, in relation to her character. The kind of world the scientist sees is determined by the assumed paradigm which defines science and gives it its identity. Similarly, how the agent's view of the world is structured and what kind of world she will see is determined by her character which defines her identity, that is, her vision of the world is character-dependent.[21]

> Character is very much connected with vision. In the first place, it is a fact of life that what we see depends not only on what is in front of our eyes, but also on what lies within our hearts and minds. Who we are determines what we see....What people see is an indication of what they care about and can care about....[V]ision depends on character.[22]

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[20] Ibid., pp. 103; 111; 112. See also Ibid., pp. 121-122.

[21] The similarity breaks down, however, since for Kuhn, the notion of vision concerns the objects of science and how these are perceived, but in relation to character, the notion of vision does not concern the objects of science and is therefore used in an extended sense, in that, the agent's vision of the world concerns what values are perceived.

[22] Dykstra, Vision and Character, pp. 50; 51; 59. See also Aristotle Nichomachean Ethics 1114b. For Aristotle, what appears to be good to the agent has to do with his own characteristics. Gustafson, Can Ethics be Christian, p. 61; Gustafson, "What Ought I to Do?," p. 68; Hauerwas, Vision and Virtue, pp. 35; 69; Stephen Hudson, Human Character and Morality (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1986), p. 44; Jacobs, "Moral Imagination," pp. 26; 29-30; 32; 33; and Meilaender, The Theory and Practice of Virtue, pp. 5; 10. Even though Jacobs and Gilbert Meilaender render normative judgments with regard to certain values when discussing agents who possess either "good" or "bad" character, the point is, that it is character (whether good or bad) that "shapes perception," and so agents who identify themselves with certain values will "see themselves and others in terms of them." See also Iris

James Gustafson uses the terms "perspective" and "posture" in connection with the concept of character, and says that it is the agent's character which renders a certain perspective or posture, which, in turn, results in a certain interpretation of the world.

Murdoch, The Sovereignty of Good (New York: Schocken Books, 1970), pp. 36-37; Amartya Sen and Bernard Williams, eds., Utilitarianism and Beyond (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), p. 6; and Sherman, The Fabric of Character, pp. 1; 4; 31; 44-50. Sherman tries to avoid a strictly cognitive view of perception by connecting the agent's internalized values with the appropriate emotions. As a result, Sherman speaks in terms of "seeing through emotions." See also Nussbaum, "The Discernment of Perception: An Arisotelian Conception of Private and Public Rationality," in Proceedings of the Boston Area Colloquium in Ancient Philosophy, vol. 1, ed. John J. Cleary (Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 1986, pp. 187-188; and Nussbaum, Fragility, pp. 307-308. Nussbaum usually discusses emotions and the perception of particular situations, however, in discussing them in more general terms "the emotions are themselves modes of vision." For Jacobs, perception involves thought and emotion. Jacobs, "Moral Imagination," pp. 29-30. For a view that stresses the cognitive aspect of perception see John McDowell, "Virtue and Reason," Monist 62 (1979):331-50. The issue here is not whether the agent's vision of the world is primarily a cognitive matter or whether it is both a cognitive matter and a matter of emotional awareness. The point is that the agent's vision of the world is determined by his character--he sees the world from a subjective point of view. This is not to deny that when certain values are internalized and deeply held, the agent's desires, feelings and attitudes will be formed in accordance with them. But this does not mean that the agent sees the world from a subjective point of view only when emotional awareness is present. The world is perceived from a subjective standpoint regardless of whether that perception is cognitive or both cognitive and emotional, since it is the agent's character that determines how the world is perceived. Regarding the cognitive aspect of emotions see Dent, The Psychology of the Virtues, pp. 53-63; Lawrence Hinman, "Emotions, Morality, and Understanding," in Moral Dilemmas: Philosophical and Psychological Issues in the Development of Moral Reasoning, ed. Carol Harding (Chicago: Precedent Pub., 1985), pp. 61-67; John Sabini and Maury Silver, "Emotions, Responsibility and Character," in Responsibility, Character and the Emotions, ed. Ferdinand Schoemar (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp. 166-169. For Sabini and Silver "the emotions are connected to cognition, connected to...what people care about and value." Ibid., p. 168. So the cause of emotion is what is perceived and what is perceived depends on character. Emotion, then, follows perception. For example, "the cause of anger...is the perception of transgression." Ibid. See also Robert C. Solomon, The Passions: The Myth and Nature of Human Emotion (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1983), pp. 171-191. For Solomon the emotions are evaluative judgments, in that, the internalized values of the agent are the objects of emotions.

> The term "perspective" suggests in its use in visual experience that there is a point from which things are perceived and observed that is determinative of what is seen and not seen, which aspects of what is seen are shadowed and which aspects are clear, which attract attention and which are subdued in attention. In moral experience we can use the term to refer to the position of the agent, his preferences for certain things, the kinds of symbols he uses to express and evaluate what he perceives and observes, the values which determine his affective responses....In moral experience we can speak of the posture of the moral agent, which indicates his orientation or directionality toward the world.[23]

So an individual who values racial purity and who believes in the suffering or annihilation of those who are of another race will not see the world in terms of individual equality and justice. And the individual who values helping others will see the world in terms of the needs of others. Even though these examples seem to illustrate certain types of character which are constituted by a single all-consuming value, or at least an overriding and lexically prior one, the notion of vision can accommodate a more complex (multi-value) view of character. The agent's vision of the world is determined by his character, regardless of its simplicity or complexity, and it is because of this that one can speak in terms of the qualification of vision: vision qualified by the individual agent's character.

As was stated, the kind of world the scientist will see is determined by a paradigm, and since paradigms are incommensurable,[24]

> the proponents of competing paradigms practice their trades in different worlds. One contains constrained bodies that fall slowly, the other pendulums that repeat their motions again and again....Practicing in different worlds, the two groups of scientists see different things when they look from the same point in the same direction. [T]hat is not to say that they can see anything they please. Both are

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[23] Gustafson, "What Ought I to Do?," pp. 64; 65. See also Ibid., p. 63; Gustafson, Theology and Christian Ethics (Philadelphia: United Church Press, 1974), pp. 110-112; 114; and Hauerwas, Vision and Virtue, p. 35.

[24] Kuhn, Scientific Revolutions, pp. 109; 125-126; 148-150.

> looking at the world, and what they look at has not changed. But in some area they see different things, and they see them in different relations one to the other.[25]

Analogously, individual agents who have inculcated different values will see the world differently and give totally different descriptions of it.[26] And those who have inculcated the same values may not see totally different worlds but may interpret the significance of things differently because of how these values have been inculcated, developed, and ranked in terms of their priority.

It is the agent's qualified vision or interpretation of the world that supplies the criterion for and determines his reasons of autonomy. In other words, his projects, goals, commitments, and so on, reflect his internalized conception of value, that is, reflect his character.[27] And as expressions of character, reasons of autonomy are part

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[25] Ibid., pp. 150. See also Ibid., p. 112.

[26] Gustafson, "Can Ethics Be Christian?," p. 61; Gustafson, "What Ought I to Do?," p. 68; and Hauerwas, Vision and Virtue, p. 34; 35. For Murdoch, "moral differences look less like differences of choice, given the same facts and more like differences of vision,...[that is], more like a total difference of Gestalt." Murdoch, "Vision and Choice in Morality," in Christian Ethics and Contemporary Philosophy, ed. Ian Ramsey (London: SCM Press LTD 1966), p. 203. See also Kuhn, Scientific Revolutions, p. 112. Here the term "gestalt" is used in connection with a paradigm change and in connection with proponents of competing paradigms, in that, a new or different gestalt is seen.

[27] Williams usually speaks in terms of reasons of autonomy being "grounded in character" (Williams, "Persons, Character and Morality," pp. 6; 14; see also Williams, Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy, p. 223 n. 16) or as constituting a character (Williams, "Persons, Character and Morality," p. 5). He also speaks in terms of reasons of autonomy being "closely related" to the agent's existence (Ibid., p. 12) or as being the expression of her identity. Ibid., p. 14; and Smart and Williams, For and Against, pp. 113; 116-117. Reasons of autonomy, therefore, are, in a very real sense, the agent's: the expression of her character. Williams, "Persons, Character and Morality," p. 6; and Williams, "Practical Necessity," in Moral Luck, p. 130. See also Dent, The Moral Psychology of the Virtues, p. 26; John Kekes, "Moral Sensitivity," Philosophy 59 (1984): 3; 6-7; 11-12; Nussbaum, "The Discernment of Perception,"

of the agent's character and not something separate from it. For example, the agent who values justice will be committed to meeting the claims and needs of others and will accomplish this by way of setting goals and becoming involved in various projects to accomplish those goals. And the agent who values racial purity will set goals and participate in projects that will reflect a commitment to the eventual annihilation of other races.

Thus far, the discussion has focused on the agent's vision of the world in general and the expression of that vision in terms of his reasons of autonomy. In more specific terms, the agent's vision of particular situations will be qualified, in that, how they are perceived and interpreted will also depend on the values that he has internalized and the reasons of autonomy that reflect those values; that is, it will depend on the individual agent's character. It is the agent's character that determines the significance of a particular situation and defines what features of it are salient.[28] For

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p. 199; Amelie O. Rorty, "Three Myths of Moral Theory," in Mind and Action (Boston: Beacon Press, 1988), pp. 284; 285; Sherman, The Fabric of Character, pp. 4; 10; 57-58; and Van Hooft, "Obligation, Character, and Commitment," pp. 355; 362. Although Van Hooft speaks in terms of reasons of autonomy being grounded in commitment, "commitment [itself] is tied to character."

In Chapter Two, reasons of autonomy were said to vary as to their degree of importance and seriousness to the individual agent and that some are considered trivial and are relegated to mere objects of taste. Reasons of autonomy, however, are not considered by the agent to be trivial in this sense when they are the expression of her character. Smart and Williams, For and Against, pp. 116-117.

[28] Blum, "Moral Perception and Particularity," Ethics 101 (July 1991):702-707; 715; David Burrell and Stanley Hauerwas, "From System to Story: An Alternative Pattern for Rationality in Ethics," in Knowledge, Value and Belief, eds. Tristram H. Engelhardt and Danial Callahan (New York: The Hastings Center, 1977), p. 118; Dykstra, Vision and Character, p. 23; Gustafson, Theology and Christian Ethics, pp. 106-108; 112; Gustafson, "What Ought I to Do?," pp. 64; 68; Hauerwas, A

Sherman, a reading of the circumstances is a process of "seeing as", in that, "circumstances do not come pre-labelled as this sort of occasion or that, they must be classified by us."[29] And how they are classified will depend on the agent's internalized conception of value. To illustrate, the agent who values justice and who is committed to meeting the claims and needs of others will see certain features as salient and will acknowledge the significance of a situation in which this value is at stake: a situation in which innocent individuals are treated unjustly.

Since the agent's vision of particular situations is qualified by his character, individual agents who have inculcated different values will see different features as salient and will therefore give totally different evaluative interpretations of the same situation. Therefore, what is acknowledged as salient by one agent will not be acknowledged as salient by another.[30] The following example given by Blum clearly illustrates this:

> John and Joan are sitting riding on a subway train. There are no empty seats and some people are standing; yet the subway car is not packed so tightly as to be uncomfortable for everyone. One of the passengers standing is a woman in her thirties holding two relatively full shopping bags. John is not particularly paying attention to the woman, but he is cognizant of her.

Community of Character (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981), pp. 114-115; Kekes, "Moral Sensitivity," pp. 5-12; McDowell, "Virtue and Reason," pp. 331-332; Meilaender, The Theory and Practice of Virtue, pp. 10; 90-95; Nussbaum, Fragility, 306; Rorty, "Virtues and Their Vicissitudes," in Midwest Studies in Philosophy, vol. 13, p. 137; Sherman, The Fabric of Character, p. 29; and Williams, Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy, p. 10.

[29] Sherman, The Fabric of Character, p. 40.

[30] Gustafson, "What Ought I to Do?", p. 68; Kekes, "Moral Sensitivity," pp. 6; 11; Meilaender, The Theory and Practice of Virtue, pp. 10; 81; 95; and Rorty, "Virtues and Their Vicissitudes," p. 137.

> Joan, by contrast, is distinctly aware that the woman is uncomfortable. Thus different aspects of the situation are 'salient' for John and Joan. That is, what is fully and explicitly present to John's consciousness about the woman is that she is standing holding some bags; but what is in that sense salient for Joan is the woman's discomfort....Joan saliently perceives...the woman's good (i.e. her comfort) as a stake in a way that John does not. Joan perceives a morally relevant value at stake, while John does not....[T]he moral significance of the difference between John's and Joan's perception of the situation lies not only in the relation between that perception and the taking of beneficent action. It lies in the fact of perception itself. We can see this more clearly if we imagine John's and Joan's perception to be fairly typical of each of them. John, let us say, often fails to take in people's discomfort, while Joan is characteristically sensitive to such discomfort. It is thus in character for the discomfort to be salient for Joan but not for John.[31]

Most likely, individual agents who have inculcated the same values will not give totally different interpretations of the same situation but may agree as to which features of a particular situation are salient, thus giving similar evaluative descriptions of it. The interpretations, however, may not be similar among individuals who have internalized the same values because of how these values have been developed and ranked in terms of their priority; and how they are developed and ranked will depend on the agent's experience and history. Two agents may perceive the same unfair treatment of innocent individuals and agree that an injustice is occurring, but each may interpret the significance of the situation differently and disagree as to which aspects of it are important.[32] Or, two agents may agree that an injustice is occurring but one may

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[31] Blum, "Moral Perception and Particularity," pp. 702-703. According to Blum, John's failure to acknowledge the discomfort of others as a morally salient feature "is a defect in his character." Ibid., pp. 703-704. In claiming that the comfort of others is a morally relevant value, Blum is making a normative judgment. Again, the purpose of this Chapter is not to give a list of values that should be inculcated, but rather to render an account of human agency. Blum's example is used only to illustrate the differences of vision among agents who have internalized different values.

[32] Gustafson, Theology and Christian Ethics, p. 112; and Sherman, The Fabric of Character, p. 29.

not see it as a problem of justice as clearly, especially if another value is at stake which is ranked higher in terms of priority.[33] The point here, however, is not how different agents will perceive the same situation, but rather, the point is that each individual agent has a character and it is his character which determines his vision of a situation and how it will be described. In other words, particular situations are perceived from a subjective point of view.

Character: A Determinant of Action

As was shown in the previous section, the agent's vision of the world, and more specifically, her vision of particular situations, is determined by her character, that is, her vision is character-dependent, and therefore, qualified. So how a particular situation is perceived and interpreted and what features of it the agent takes to be salient will depend on the values that she has internalized and the reasons of autonomy which reflect those values. Seeing certain features of a situation as salient and acknowledging its significance need not result in the agent engaging her agency. However, when an agent deliberates about what to do and engages her agency,[34] it is

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[33] Blum tries to capture the complexity of perception by talking of "awareness of a situation, or an aspect of it, existing 'at different levels.' An aspect or feature can be more or less salient for, or 'taken in' by, an agent. This notion of salience, admitting of degrees, preserves this idea." Blum, "Moral Perception and Particularity," p. 703.

[34] When an agent engages her agency and does act, this assumes the literal possibility of performing the action. Obviously, the agent cannot perform an action if it is literally impossible to do so, either because of the physical incapacities of the agent or because the circumstances themselves impede action. Again, the purpose of this chapter is to give an account of human agency, that is, to give an account of the agent who engages her agency, and so, does act.

because the situation is perceived in a certain way.[35] Blum's example of John and Joan not only illustrates how the same situation can be perceived differently by individuals with different characters but also illustrates the relationship between perception and action. "John's perception provides him with no reason to offer to help the woman. Whereas, in involving the woman's good, Joan's perception of the situation [the woman's comfort as salient and a relevant value at stake] already provides her with a reason for action."[36] Put simply, actions follow from the agent's "vision of what is most...valuable".[37] Perceptual salience, then, occurs prior to deliberation and "provides the setting in which an agent decides to act....[and] unless she already perceives her situation in a certain way in the first place, she will not engage her agency."[38] For Sherman, "this process of 'seeing as' is a necessary prerequisite for action."[39]

So deliberation and action follow from the agent's vision of a particular situation and seeing certain features of it as salient and acknowledging its significance.

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[35] Blum, "Moral Perception and Particularity," p. 707; Gustafson, Can Ethics Be Christian?, p. 9; Hauerwas, Vision and Virtue, p. 69; McDowell, "Virtue and Reason," p. 347; and Sherman, The Fabric of Character, pp. 28-29; 31; 40.

[36] Blum, "Moral Perception and Particularity," p. 703. See also McDowell, "Virtue and Reason," pp. 331-332; and Sherman, The Fabric of Character, p. 29.

[37] Hauerwas, Vision and Virtue, p. 30. See also Sherman, The Fabric of Character, pp. 29-31.

[38] Blum, "Moral Perception and Particularity," pp. 707; 703, n. 3. See also Dykstra, Vision and Character, pp. 22; 59; Hinman, "Emotion, Morality and Understanding," p. 65; and Kekes, "Moral Sensitivity," p. 12.

[39] Sherman, The Fabric of Character, p. 40. See also Ibid., p. 29.

However, it is the agent's character, her internalized conception of value, that determines what will be seen as salient and significant. In other words, the agent deliberates and acts from her character: deliberates and acts from a subjective point of view. Therefore, the relationship between vision and action is fundamentally a relationship between character and action, in that, it is character that determines action; so what the agent does arises from the sort of person she is.[40] Because the agent has inculcated certain values--values which have meaning and are something in which the

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[40] Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics, 1114a10-20; Dent, The Moral Psychology of the Virtues, p. 15; Gustafson, Can Ethics Be Christian?, pp. 7-9; 18; 46; Gustafson, Theology and Christian Ethics, p. 107; Gustafson, "What Ought I to Do?," pp. 63; 66-68; Hauerwas, Character and the Christian Life, pp. 74; 89; 107; 113; 119-120; 123; 203; Hauerwas, "Obligation and Virtue Once More," in Truthfulness and Tragedy (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1977), pp. 44-45; and Hauerwas, Vision and Virtue, pp. 54; 62; 69. For Hauerwas, character "gives orientation and direction to life," whether it is constituted by one all-consuming value or many values which are interrelated and hierarchically prioritized. Hauerwas, Vision and Virtue, p. 62; and Hauerwas, Character and the Christian Life, pp. 119; 123; 203. Character, then, is the "cause of our actions;" a cause which is internal to the agent in the sense that the agent's actions arise from his internalized conception of value. Hauerwas, Character and the Christian Life, pp. 113; 42; 123. Hudson, "Character Traits and Desires," Ethics 90 (July 1980):541-542; Hudson, Human Character and Morality, p. 44; Jacobs, "Moral Imagination," pp. 26; 31-33; and Kekes, "Moral Sensitivity," pp. 6-7; 11. For Jacobs and Kekes, actions are expressions of the agent's internalized conception of value; they "are manifestations of these deeper structures." Jacobs, "Moral Imagination," p. 33; and Kekes, "Moral Sensitivity," p. 11. See also Kosman, "Being Properly Affected," p. 112; McDowell, "Virtue and Reason," pp. 331; 343-344; 346; Meilaender, The Theory and Practice of Virtue, pp. 90-93; Lynn Mather Musser and Christopher Leone, "Moral Character: A Social Learning Perspective," in Psychological Foundations of Moral Education and Character Development, ed. by Richard T. Knowles and George F. McLean (Lanham: University of America Press, 1986), pp. 165-167; Nicgorski and Ellrod, "Moral Character," pp. 154-155; Nussbaum, Fragility, p. 306; Sherman, The Fabric of Character, pp. 4; 31; Smart and Williams, For and Against, pp. 100; 116; Taylor, Human Agency and Language, p. 35; Van Hooft, "Obligation, Character, and Commitment," pp. 354-355; Williams, "Justice as a Virtue," in Moral Luck, pp. 90-91; and Williams, "Utilitarianism and Moral Self-Indulgence," in Moral Luck, pp. 51-52.

agent believes and takes seriously--she will be concerned about family, power, justice, racial purity, and so on. From this conception of value the agent will derive "many ongoing guidelines for action, pointers as to what to look for in a particular situation;...an occasion for courage, for generous living, for justice."[41] To return to Blum's example, it is Joan's character that enables her to perceive the woman's comfort as salient and a relevant value at stake. Her decision to comfort the woman is based on this perception; and since this perception is fundamentally based on her internalized conception of value, her action stems from her character. In other words, her action is an expression of her character and is something that she ought to do because she is committed to certain values.[42] It is her internalized conception of value that determines what she ought to do.[43]

In the previous section, it was stated that, because it is the agent's character that determines his vision of the world, and more specifically his vision of particular

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[41] Nussbaum, Fragility, p. 306.

[42] It is important to understand that what the agent ought to do is not contingent upon the agent's articulation of these values. In other words, the agent's conception of value need not enter her reasons for performing the action. The agent may not fully be aware (due to lack of reflection) of what she values and so may have only a tacit knowledge and understanding of this. It is only through reflection or through situations that evoke a practical response that the agent may come to realize what she, in fact, is committed to.

[43] Therefore, it is not an impersonal "ought", but rather, an "ought" which is personal; an "ought" that arises from the agent's character: a concrete ought. Dent, The Moral Psychology of the Virtues, p. 19; Gustafson, Theology and Christian Ethics, p. 107; Gustafson, "What Ought I to Do?," p. 69; Hauerwas, Vision and Virtue, p. 78; Hudson, Human Character and Morality, p. 43; McDowell, "Virtue and Reason," p. 331; Van Hooft, "Obligation, Character, and Commitment," p. 355; and Williams, "Practical Necessity."

situations, his vision is a qualified one. Similarly, since actions are based on the agent's qualified vision and hence fundamentally determined by his character; agency, then, is also qualified. The agent acts from his internalized conception of value and so agency is qualified in the sense that character sets the boundaries for action, that is, it determines the possibilities and limitations of action. In simple terms, what the agent can or cannot do[44] is dependent upon the character that he has.[45] For example, an agent who values racial purity cannot (psychologically and intentionally) perform actions which will perpetuate racial diversity. He can however perform actions that will result in the annihilation of racial diversity; actions that he feels he ought to perform because of his internalized conception of value. Moreover,

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[44] The issue here is not what the agent literally can or cannot do, but rather, the issue is what he psychologically can and cannot do based on the character that he has. For Williams there is a difference between what an agent literally cannot do and what he psychologically cannot do, in that, "if an agent has [a psychological] incapacity to do X he will not do it intentionally but may do it unintentionally." Williams, "Practical Necessity," p. 129. And to be able to perform the action unintentionally means that it is an act that the agent literally can do. This difference also applies to what an agent can do, in that, what he can do psychologically may not be something he can do literally.

[45] Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics, 1114a10-20; Dent, The Moral Psychology of the Virtues, p. 15; Gustafson, Can Ethics Be Christian, pp. 7-9; Gustafson, "What Ought I to Do?," pp. 63; 68; 69; and Hauerwas, Character and the Christian Life, pp. 113-120. For Hauerwas, it is the agent's character which gives "determination and focus to [his] agency and which directs [his] life in a rather definite and limited fashion." Ibid., pp. 203; 123. See also Kekes, "Moral Sensitivity," p. 6; Kupperman, Character, p. 140; and Abraham Aaron Roback, The Psychology of Character (New York: Arno Press, 1973), pp. 447-460. For Roback, the agent's character not only determines what an agent can do, but it is also that which inhibits action. See also Williams, Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy, p. 223, n. 16; Williams, "Justice as a Virtue," pp. 90-91; and Williams, "Practical Necessity." In "Practical Necessity" Williams speaks in terms of the capacities and incapacities of character. See also Williams, "Self-Indulgence," p. 51.

> an Aristotelian wise man...would be incapable of performing certain kinds of dastardly actions and might reasonably speak of having no choice in the matter. To bring the point home: Would the reader be capable of torturing a small child for money? For virtually all of us, there is no choice in the matter.[46]

There is no choice because of the kind of character the Aristotelian wise man has. In order for him to be able to perform certain kinds of dastardly action he must have a different set of values, that is, he must be a different kind of person. The same holds true for the agent who values racial purity. In order for the racial purist to perform actions that will perpetuate racial diversity, he must be the kind of person who values racial diversity; and in valuing racial diversity, he is no longer a racial purist. And it is this internalized conception of value (racial diversity) that determines the possibilities and limitations of action for the agent and thus qualifies his agency.

The purpose of this chapter was to give an account of human agency by developing the concept of character and to show that subjectivity, defined in terms of character, is ineliminable and that human agency is essentially personal.

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[46] Kupperman, Character, p. 86.

CHAPTER IV

CHARACTER: THE PROBLEM OF AGENCY

In Chapter Three an account of human agency was given by developing the notion of character and showing its relation to agency. It was shown that subjectivity, defined in terms of character, is ineliminable and that human agency is essentially personal. This poses a problem for certain types of objective moral theories when they are applied at the level of the individual agent who has a character. The purpose of this chapter is to delineate the particular problem of subjectivity this account of agency poses for both purely impersonal theories and those which consist of an impersonal element: theories which either require or permit an agent to act either contrary to or apart from his character.

Purely Impersonal Moral Theories: Requiring Agents to Act "Contrary to" Their Character

Act-Consequentialist Theories[1]

Maximizing Consequentialism

In Chapter Two it was shown that a particular problem of subjectivity arises for consequentialism when it is applied as a decision-making procedure for individual choice: the problem of integrity. This problem arises because of the level of objectivity at which deliberation occurs: the level of the individual agent who has reasons of autonomy. To briefly reiterate, consequentialism demands too much and thus violates the agent's integrity because it does not reflect the independence of the subjective point of view, in that, the agent is only allowed to pursue his reasons of autonomy when doing so would produce the best state of affairs; otherwise, the agent is required to abandon them whenever doing so would produce the best state of affairs. In other words, it requires the agent to devote energy and attention to his reasons of autonomy in strict proportion to their value impersonally considered, despite their importance to the agent which is likely to be disproportionate to and therefore independent of their value when assessed from an impersonal standpoint. Consequently, the agent cannot decide on what to do independently of the weight his reasons of autonomy have in the impersonal calculus and so he cannot pursue and act on his reasons of autonomy unless this is best from an impersonal point of view. Because the integrity problem is based

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[1] Since only act versions of consequentialism will be considered in this section, the terms "consequentialism" and "consequentialist" will be used.

on the strict proportionality feature and not on a certain conception of the good, it applies to both subjective and objective versions of utilitarianism and also to non-utilitarian versions of consequentialism since they all share the same conception of the right.

In Chapter Three reasons of autonomy are seen in terms of being the expression of the agent's internalized conception of value and therefore a part of his character. The problem of subjectivity to be delineated here arises because of the level of objectivity at which consequentialist theories are applied: the level of the individual agent who has a character. The problem is not that consequentialism does not reflect the independence of the subjective point of view and so demands too much, but rather, the problem is that it requires the agent to abandon his reasons of autonomy and therefore requires him to act contrary to his character when so acting produces the best state of affairs. The problem that arises here has to do with agency and not the integrity of the agent. The problem of agency arises because the agent is not allowed to act from his character--since acting from his character does not produce the best state of affairs--and yet he is required to engage his agency. But in order for him to act, he must act from his internalized conception of value; and so by requiring him to act contrary to and therefore not from his character, a necessary condition of agency is threatened. The problem of agency arises for utilitarianism (both subjective and objective versions) because of its criterion of right action which requires an agent always to perform the act which produces the best state of affairs in terms of maximizing happiness or preference-satisfaction or other values (not dependent on the

subjective states of agents) that enhance welfare. Consequently, the agent is allowed to act in accordance with his character only when doing so would produce the best state of affairs; otherwise, he must be willing to act contrary to his character whenever this would be productive of the best state of affairs. The problem also applies to non-utilitarian consequentialist theories which require an agent to perform actions that will produce the best states of affairs in terms of other values: values that possess intrinsic worth independent of subjective or objective conceptions of welfare. Similarly, as with utilitarianism, the agent is only allowed to act in accordance with his character if this is what would maximize value; otherwise he is required to act contrary to his character if that would maximize value.

As was shown, when an agent deliberates about what to do and engages his agency, it is because the situation is perceived in a certain way; and it is the agent's internalized conception of value that determines how the situation is perceived and what is salient and significant. In other words, the agent deliberates and acts from his character. It is his character that provides his reasons (in the sense of <u>why</u> he acts) for acting and so determines his action and what he ought to do. Therefore, his agency is qualified, in that, it is <u>his</u> character which sets the boundaries for action and thus determines the possibilities and limitations of action for him. It is in this sense that subjectivity is ineliminable, thus rendering human agency essentially personal. Consequentialism, then, by requiring an agent to act contrary to his character, threatens a necessary condition of agency, meaning it requires an agent to perform actions whose condition for performing is not present for him. It is the agent's character that

determines his action and renders an ought. It is his character that determines the possibilities and limitations of action and what he can and cannot do. Therefore, in order for the agent to perform certain kinds of action he must be committed to certain values. So in requiring an agent to act contrary to his character, consequentialism is requiring an agent to do what he cannot (psychologically) do, or be expected to do, since he does not have the capacity to do it. Hence, in order for the agent to perform actions that are contrary to his character and yet are possible actions for him, the agent must have a different set of values. In other words, the agent must have a different kind of character and so be an empirically different kind of person; and in being a different kind of person, the agent is not acting contrary to his character, but rather, he is acting from his character. The actions, then, that are required, become possible for him since it is his character which qualifies his agency and sets the boundaries for action and thus determines what he ought to do. The actions become possible for the agent because the necessary condition for performing them is present for him.

Since moral theories are applied at the level of the individual who has a character, this is a necessary condition for the agent who has a character (and thus acts from it) and is required by theory to act contrary to it. Character is a determinant of action and is therefore a necessary condition of agency in the sense that the agent acts from his character, and so by requiring the agent to act contrary to his character, consequentialism fails to recognize that character is a condition which is necessary in order for the agent to act. Character is not, however, a necessary condition of agency in the sense that it is a condition which is necessary in order for the agent to be able to

act. In other words, positing character as a necessary condition of agency should not be taken to mean that it is impossible for an agent to act unless he is acting from his character. In order to account for certain types of phenomena such as weakness of will and character change, it must be possible for an agent to act even though he is not acting from his character. It is possible for an agent to act contrary to his character, but in order for an agent to engage his agency, the idea must be made part of a subjective point of view and something he, the empirically constituted agent, decides to do. So even though the agent is acting contrary to his internalized conception of value due to weakness of will or character change, he is still acting from a subjective standpoint. In Chapter Three it was shown that subjectivity, defined in terms of character, is ineliminable with regard to human agency. By taking into account the above phenomena, a more complete account can be given, in that, subjectivity, defined in terms of the standpoint of the empirically constituted agent, is ineliminable with regard to human agency, whether this means acting from character, or, not acting from character but contrary to character but yet acting from a subjective standpoint. This more complete account shows that human agency is personal regardless of whether the agent acts from his character or contrary to it. Since it is possible for the agent to act contrary to his character, the relationship between character and agency, then, is not a necessary one. The agent's character, however, is a determinant of action when weakness of will and character change are not present factors: it is the reason why he acts. Consequently, character is a condition which is necessary when the agent is required by theory to perform certain actions; and it is only when this condition is

present that such actions are possible for the agent who has a character. There is a necessary relationship, however, between subjectivity, defined in terms of the standpoint of the concrete agent, and agency, in that, it is impossible for the agent to act unless he is acting from a subjective point of view. So even though an agent is free to act contrary to his character, this should not be taken to mean freedom from a subjective standpoint.

The account of human agency given in Chapter Three is not a complete account, in that, weakness of will and character change are not considered. However, a complete account is not necessary in order to delineate the problem of agency: a problem that arises because of the fundamental assumption certain moral theories have regarding moral agency. Because agents normally and thus usually act from their internalized conception of value and since ethics and thus the regulation of human behavior is the concern of this present work, the focus is on subjectivity, defined in terms of character, and its relation to agency. The account that is given is an account of human agency in its strongest form as found in the concept of character.

Satisficing Consequentialism: Slote

In Chapter Two proposed solutions that have been put forward in response to the problem of integrity were presented. The first solution that was discussed is one proposed by Slote who tries to accommodate the problem within a purely consequentialist framework by considering a certain form of consequentialism: satisficing consequentialism. To restate, satisficing consequentialism, like optimizing

forms, judges the rightness of an act solely by the impersonal state of affairs it produces, but counts as right an action which produces states of affairs which are good enough (non-optimal) in relation to the best state of affairs.

As was pointed out, even though satisficing consequentialism does not share the same conception of the right as optimizing forms in the sense that it does not require the agent always to perform the act which produces the best state of affairs, it does, however, share a different aspect of that conception: the strict proportionality feature. And as was shown, the problem of integrity as levied against optimizing consequentialism is based on the strict proportionality feature and arises in response to the discrepancy between the importance reasons of autonomy have for the agent--an importance which is generally disproportionate to their value when assessed from an impersonal standpoint--and the way in which consequentialism requires the agent to treat the importance of reasons of autonomy, that is, in strict proportion to their value as assessed from an impersonal standpoint. Consequently, satisficing consequentialism in sharing the strict proportionality feature does not reflect the independence of the subjective point of view since it allows the agent to pursue her reasons of autonomy only when doing so would produce states of affairs which are impersonally good enough; otherwise, the agent must be willing to abandon them--their importance notwithstanding--whenever this would produce states of affairs which are good enough. Like optimizing forms, satisficing consequentialism ranks states of affairs from best to worst according to their value impersonally considered and not according to their value for an individual agent and so requires the agent to devote energy and attention to his

reasons of autonomy in strict proportion to their value as assessed from an impersonal standpoint. Because of this, satisficing consequentialism has the very problem it sets out to resolve. For even though less is required in terms of the amount of good produced, satisficing consequentialism does not allow the subjective point of view any role in determining what the agent may do independently of its value impersonally considered and so is not an adequate solution to the problem of integrity.

However, when reasons of autonomy are seen in terms of being the expression of and therefore a part of the agent's character and it is seen that the agent deliberates and acts from his character, the problem is not that consequentialism (optimizing) demands too much by not reflecting the independence of the subjective standpoint, but rather, the problem is that it threatens a necessary condition of human agency by requiring an agent to act contrary to her character. Similarly, the problem of agency applies to satisficing consequentialism because of its conception of the right which requires an agent always to perform the act which would produce states of affairs which are impersonally good enough. Meaning, the agent is allowed to act in accordance with her character only when doing so would produce states of affairs which are impersonally good enough; otherwise, she must act contrary to her character whenever this would produce states of affairs which are good enough. And by requiring an agent to act contrary to her character satisficing consequentialism threatens a necessary condition of agency.[2]

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[2] The problem of agency would also apply to a weaker version of satisficing consequentialism, which, compared to Slote's version, would allow even less good to be produced. Although less would be required, this weaker conception of the right also

In summation, the problem of agency is a problem for both optimizing and satisficing consequentialism because of their conception of the right (and not the good) which requires an agent either to perform actions which produce the best state of affairs impersonally considered, or, those which produce states of affairs that are good enough. In requiring this, they require the agent to act contrary to her character if this would produce either what is best or good enough in terms of states of affairs. And in requiring this, both forms of consequentialism threaten a necessary condition of human agency.

Alienation and the Problem of Integrity: Williams

Because of Williams' contribution in shifting the emphasis from others and how they are affected, to problems that occur with regard to the individual agent by the application of certain moral theories, it is important at this juncture to differentiate the problem of integrity as presented in Chapter Two from the problem of integrity as put forward by Williams; and also to differentiate the problem Williams is presenting from the problem of agency which is delineated in the present chapter.

As was noted,[3] the problem of integrity as rendered in Chapter Two is not the problem of integrity Williams is delineating. The particular problem of subjectivity he is addressing is a deeper and more general problem since it is one that cuts across

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entails the strict proportionality feature. As a result, the agent would be allowed to act in accordance with her character only when doing so would produce enough impersonal good; otherwise the agent must act contrary to her character whenever this would produce enough good.

[3] See p. 41 n.24 above.

consequentialist and deontological lines. In terms of utilitarianism, the problem arises because of the level of objectivity at which it is applied: the level of the individual agent who has a character. The problem for Williams is not that utilitarianism demands too much by not reflecting the independence of the subjective point of view because of its strict proportionality feature, but rather, the problem is that utilitarianism, because of its conception of the right, requires the agent to act contrary to his character whenever this would be productive of the best state of affairs.[4] And by requiring an agent to act contrary to his character, it "alienate[s] him in a real sense from his actions and the source of his action in his own convictions....It is thus, in the most literal sense, an attack on his integrity."[5]

Williams' sense of integrity has to do with the notion of personal identity, in that, integrity is upheld if an agent's feelings and actions flow from his identity which is defined by his internalized conception of value and the reasons of autonomy which reflect this conception. And so when the agent is required to act contrary to his character (which defines his identity), he is alienated from both his feelings and his actions, that is, alienated from himself; thus, the agent's integrity is violated. An action that upholds the agent's integrity is one that is integrated with the agent's personal identity and thereby one that sustains the unity or wholeness of his identity.[6]

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[4] Smart and Williams, For and Against, pp. 93-118; and Williams, "Persons, Character and Morality," p. 14.

[5] Smart and Williams, For and Against, pp. 116; 117.

[6] Smart and Williams, For and Against, pp. 99-100; 104; 108-117; and Williams, "Persons, Character and Morality," pp. 5-6. For more on Williams' problem of

Since all versions of consequentialism share the same conception of the right and thereby require an agent to act contrary to his character if so acting will produce the best state of affairs, Williams' criticism can also be applied to consequentialism in general and not only to utilitarianism. It also applies to satisficing consequentialism, since even though it does not share the same conception of the right as optimizing forms in the sense that it does not require the agent to perform the act which produces the best state of affairs, nevertheless, it does require an agent to act contrary to his character if doing so would produce states of affairs which are good enough. Not only does Williams' criticism apply to both optimizing and satisficing forms of consequentialism, but in "Persons, Character and Morality," he continues his discussion on the problem of integrity and utilitarianism and shows how it applies to Kant as well.

> [T]he Kantian, who can do rather better than [utilitarianism], still cannot do well enough. For impartial morality, if the conflict [between the agent's character and impartial morality] really does arise, must be required to win; and that cannot necessarily be a reasonable demand on the agent.[7]

At this point in the discussion, Williams refers to the integrity problem as first presented in Utilitarianism: For and Against, to wit, why it is unreasonable for both

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integrity see Spencer Carr, "The Integrity of a Utilitarian," Ethics 86 (April 1976); Conly, "Utilitarianism and Integrity," Monist 66 (1983):300-303; Gerald Dworkin, review of Utilitarianism: For and Against, by J. J. Smart and Bernard Williams, Philosophical Review, 84 (July 1975):420-421; Harris, "Integrity and Agent-Centered Restrictions," pp. 438-439; Charles E. Love Jr., "Projects, Moral Education, and the Limits of Moral Reasoning," Proceedings of Philosophy of Education 41 (1985):239-242; Railton, "Alienation," pp. 146-148; and Kenneth F. Rogerson, "Williams and Kant on Integrity," Dialogue 22 (1983):461-466.

[7] Williams, "Persons, Character and Morality," p. 14.

utilitarianism and Kantianism to require an agent to act contrary to his character.[8] It is unreasonable because it alienates the agent from his feelings and action and thus violates his integrity.

From this, it is evident that the problem of integrity as delineated by Williams is not based on the doctrine of negative responsibility[9] which is a notion peculiar to utilitarianism. On this doctrine, the agent is responsible for failing to prevent negative states of affairs that will be caused by another agent. Some have interpreted Williams in this way, and perhaps it is because he does discuss the notion of negative responsibility in connection with the problem of integrity.[10] It is discussed in connection with the problem of integrity because Williams is trying to show how utilitarianism, through its notion of negative responsibility, alienates the agent from his feelings and actions and thus violates his integrity. The notion of negative responsibility violates the agent's integrity because it would require the agent to act contrary to his character if this is what would thwart the harmful consequences that may be caused by another agent. So for Williams, the problem of integrity fundamentally arises because of the utilitarian conception of the right which requires

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[8] Ibid., p. 14 n. 20.

[9] Williams discusses this notion in For and Against, pp. 93-100.

[10] Smart and Williams, For and Against, pp. 99; 108-109; 115; 116. For this interpretation see Conly, "Utilitarianism and Integrity," pp. 303-306; Davis, "Utilitarianism and Responsibility," see especially pp. 16-19; 22-24; Dworkin, review of Utilitarianism: For and Against, pp. 420-421; A. J. Ellis, review of Utilitarianism: For and Against, by J. J. Smart and Bernard Williams, Philosophical Quarterly 24 (July 1974):280; and John Harris, "Williams on Negative Responsibility and Integrity," Philosophical Quarterly 24 (1974):265-273.

the agent to act contrary to his character if this will produce the best state of affairs, regardless of whether or not the "causal connections through which [the agent] can affect outcomes run through other people's [harmful] actions."[11]

Thus far, the problem of integrity as put forward by Williams has been differentiated from the problem of integrity as presented in Chapter Two. Moreover, it also must be differentiated from the problem which is delineated in the present chapter.

The problem is not that consequentialism, by requiring the agent to act contrary to his character if this would either produce the best state of affairs or that which is good enough, alienates the agent from his actions and thus violates his integrity. Based on the account of human agency given in Chapter Three and what it means to have a character, it was shown that the problem is not that consequentialism demands too much by not reflecting the independence of the subjective point of view; and neither is it a problem of alienation based on the notion of personal identity, but rather, the problem is that consequentialism, by requiring an agent to act contrary to and therefore not from his character, threatens a necessary condition of human agency.[12] And as was said, when weakness of will and character change are not present factors, the agent's

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[11] Williams, Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy, pp. 76-77.

[12] Unfortunately, Williams does not give a systematized account of human agency but only hints at the account given in Chapter Three. And in most of these instances Williams is addressing other issues (especially in Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy; "Justice as a Virtue;" "Practical Necessity;" and "Utilitarianism and Moral Self-Indulgence"), and so only upon a close reading does one catch a glimpse of this account. Williams himself does not present the problem as a problem of agency in the sense that a necessary condition of agency is threatened when the agent is required to act contrary to his character. Instead, he clearly presents the problem as a problem of alienation and ensuing loss of integrity.

character is a determinant of action and is therefore a condition which is necessary in order for the agent to act.

Kant

The problem of integrity as delineated in Chapter Two was shown to be a problem for consequentialism because of its strict proportionality feature. Since the problem of integrity is based on the strict proportionality feature, and since this is a feature unique to consequentialism and its conception of the right, it is not a problem that is attributed to Kant and other deontological theories. In Chapter Three an account of human agency was given by developing the notion of character and showing its relation to the agent's actions. In light of this account, it was then shown that a different problem of subjectivity arises for consequentialism when it is applied at the level of the individual agent who has a character: the problem of agency. Unlike the problem of integrity, the problem of agency cuts across consequentialist and deontological lines, in that, it also applies to Kant. The problem of agency arises for Kant because of his criterion of right action.

Kant's criterion of right action, the categorical imperative (the moral law), is both a negative and a positive test. It is a negative test, in that, it tells the agent what he should not do, and it is also a positive test, in that, it also tells the agent what he should do.

> The categorical imperative, inasmuch as it asserts an obligation regarding certain actions, is a morally-practical law. But since obligation contains not only practical necessity (which law in general asserts) but also constraint, the imperative

> mentioned is a law of either command or prohibition, according to which the performance or the omission is represented as a duty.[13]

It is important to keep in mind that the categorical imperative is strictly a criterion of right action, in that, it "asserts an obligation regarding certain actions" and so it "only expresses what obligation is."[14] In other words, it is only a criterion for determining whether actions are objectively right (fulfill "the letter" of the moral law) and not a criterion for determining whether actions are morally worthy (fulfill "the spirit" of the moral law).[15] So the categorical imperative tells the agent what he ought to do; but it does not tell him about the spirit in which he ought to do it. Since the problem of agency arises because of Kant's criterion of right action, the present purpose is to elucidate this criterion and the lawful character of action.[16]

Kant offers a pure ethic, in that, the moral law, as a law of action, is not based on or deduced from the special nature of any type of rational being (human or

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[13] Immanuel Kant, The Metaphysics of Morals (Part II The Metaphysical Principles of Virtue), trans. James W. Ellington (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co., Inc., 1983), pp. 22-23. See also Ibid., p. 15; Immanuel Kant, Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysic of Morals, trans. Thomas K. Abbott (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Co., Inc., 1949), p. 21.

[14] Kant, Metaphysics of Morals, pp. 22; 25.

[15] Kant clearly distinguishes an action that is right or lawful, that is, an action that accords with or conforms to the requirements of the categorical imperative, from an action that is moral. See Kant, Fundamental Principles, pp. 15-16; 24; Immanuel Kant, Critique of Practical Reason, trans. Lewis White Beck (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Co., Inc., 1956), pp. 74-75; 84; 85; 87-88; 121-122; 155.

[16] In the subsequent section it will be shown that the problem of agency arises in another way because of Kant's criterion of right action.

non-human); but rather it is based on "the very conception of the will of a rational being [i.e. pure reason]."[17]

> [I]t is clear that all moral conceptions have their seat and origin completely a priori in the reason, and that, moreover, in the commonest reason just as truly as in that which is in the highest degree speculative; that they cannot be obtained by abstraction from any empirical, and therefore merely contingent, knowledge; that it is just this purity of their origin that makes them worthy to serve as our supreme practical principle....[It is] of the greatest practical importance, to derive these notions and laws from pure reason, to present them pure and unmixed; ...and in doing so, we must not make its principles dependent on the particular nature of human reason, though in speculative philosophy this may be permitted, or may even at times be necessary; but since moral laws ought to hold good for every rational creature, we must derive them from the general concept of a rational being....For with what right could we bring into unbounded respect as a universal precept for every rational nature that which perhaps holds only under the contingent conditions of humanity? Or how could laws of the determination of our will be regarded as laws of the determination of the will of rational beings generally, and for us only as such, if they were merely empirical and did not take their origin wholly a priori from pure but practical reason?[18]

Because the notion of morality is not based on anything empirical, and so is a priori in origin, its principle is the same and therefore valid for all rational beings that are capable of action. And for Kant, only principles that are valid for all rational beings belong to pure ethics.

> Now this principle of morality...is declared by reason to be a law for all rational beings in so far as they have a will, i.e., faculty of determining their causality through the conception of a rule, and consequently in so far as they are competent to determine their actions according to principles and thus to act according to practical a priori principles, which alone have the necessity which reason demands in a principle. It is thus not limited to human beings but extends to all finite beings having reason and will; indeed, it includes the Infinite Being as the supreme intelligence.[19]

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[17] Kant, Fundamental Principles, p. 44. See also Ibid., pp. 5-7; 26-30; 28 n. 1; 42-44; 58; and Kant, Metaphysics of Morals, pp. 15-16.

[18] Kant, Fundamental Principles, pp. 29; 26.

[19] Kant, Critique of Practical Reason, p. 32.

And it is from this a priori principle that "practical rules must be capable of being deduced for every rational nature, and accordingly for that of man."[20]

The principle that is derived from pure reason and which is to serve as the objective moral principle for all rational beings is universality. For Kant,

> The pre-eminent good which we call moral can...consist in nothing else than the conception of law in itself, which certainly is only possible in a rational being. But what sort of law can that be...? As I have deprived the will of every impulse which could arise to it from obedience to any law, there remains nothing but the universal conformity of its actions to law in general, which alone is to serve the will as a principle.[21]

Here Kant is characterizing the principle of pure reason as the essence of law as such. For Kant, the will does not contain the matter of the law but "is thought of as independent of empirical conditions and consequently as pure will, determined by the mere form of the law."[22] And when all material of the law is removed "nothing remains except the mere form of giving universal law."[23] In other words, whatever may be the content of a law, in order for it to be a law it must have the form of universality; otherwise it cannot be considered a law if it only applies generally and not universally. Universality then is the essential characteristic of law in itself, in that, when all content is removed from a law nothing remains but its form: universality. It is this principle, the form of law as such, which serves as the "determining ground of

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[20] Kant, Fundamental Principles, p. 28 n. 1.

[21] Ibid., p. 19.

[22] Kant, Critique of Practical Reason, p. 31. See also Ibid., pp. 28; 70; Kant, Fundamental Principles, p. 18; and Kant, Metaphysics of Morals, p. 12.

[23] Kant, Critique of Practical Reason, p. 26. See also Ibid., pp. 28-29.

choice"[24] and which is the objective moral principle for all particular objective principles as they apply to different types of rational beings. And because the moral principle concerns the form of the law and not its content, it is a purely formal normative principle,[25] and as such material principles cannot be deduced from it; but rather, they must be appraised by it.[26]

Thus far, the focus has been on Kant's a priori principle of morality which is the same for all rational beings. The concern here, however, is not how this principle applies to all rational beings but how it applies to human beings specifically, since the overall concern of this present work is human agency and not the agency of other types of beings. As was said, the problem of agency arises when Kant's criterion of right action--the principle of universality--is applied at the level of the individual agent who has a character.

With regard to human beings and human rationality "pure reason is practical of itself alone [i.e., directly legislative], and it gives (to man) a universal law, which we

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[24] Kant, Metaphysics of Morals, p. 12. See also Kant, Critique of Practical Reason, pp. 31; 33.

[25] Kant, Fundamental Principles, p. 18.

[26] Kant sometimes speaks as if material principles can be deduced from the moral principle (Kant, Fundamental Principles, pp. 28 n. 1; 38; 46); but upon closer examination it is clear that Kant is referring to material principles that are appraised and conform to this formal principle. Material principles cannot be derived from a purely formal principle but must be supplied. If material principles were to be derived from a formal principle they would be completely devoid of material content and would in that case be merely formal and, therefore, contradictions in terms. The moral law, then, only can be applied to material principles.

call the moral law."[27] When Kant refers to the principle of pure reason as the "moral law,"[28] or the "principle of morality,"[29] or the "supreme practical principle,"[30] he is referring to it in its most general sense as the principle of rationality as such and not as a principle applied to any specific type of rational being and how it appears to such a being. In relation to human beings (not holy beings) the moral law appears as a categorical[31] imperative (command; obligation) and as such it is a formula which "express[es] the relation of [the] objective [moral] law of all volition to the subjective imperfection of the will of this or that rational being, for example, the human will."[32]

In reference to human beings, Kant says that

> the law has the form of an imperative. For though we can suppose that men as rational beings have a pure will, since they are affected by wants and sensuous motives [and so not necessarily determined by the moral law] we cannot suppose them to have a holy will, a will incapable of any maxims which conflict with the moral law [since the moral law determines such a will necessarily and so all its maxims are at the same time objective laws]. The moral law for them, therefore,

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[27] Kant, Critique of Practical Reason, p. 32. See also Ibid., p. 31; and Kant Metaphysics of Morals, p. 12.

[28] Kant, Critique of Practical Reason, pp. 32-33; 84-85.

[29] Ibid., p. 32.

[30] Kant, Fundamental Principles, pp. 29; 46.

[31] It is a categorical imperative, in that, the moral law itself is not conditioned by any end (as are hypothetical imperatives), meaning it merely expresses the form of law as such and therefore not the end which the law seeks to fulfill. Consequently, it "commands a certain conduct immediately, without having as its condition any other purpose to be attained by it....It concerns not the matter of the action, or its intended result [thus making the action necessary of itself], but its form and the principle of which it is itself a result....This imperative may be called that of morality." Kant, Fundamental Principles, p. 33. See also Ibid., p. 38.

[32] Ibid., p. 31.

> is an imperative, commanding categorically because it is unconditioned. The relation of such a will to this law is one of dependence under the name of 'obligation.'[33]

And "the categorical imperative which...expresses what obligation is, is this: Act according to a maxim which can at the same time be valid as a universal law!"[34]

It is evident that, as is, the categorical imperative is a purely formal normative principle, in that, nothing material (in the form of particular duties) can be deduced from it; and so it is strictly a test for the appraisal of material principles which must be supplied. For Kant, the material principle to be supplied is a principle of action (maxim), meaning it is the practical principle or rule which is manifested in an action.[35] In order to determine whether maxims are morally legitimate they must be appraised by the categorical imperative which is "the supreme condition of all maxims."[36] And the required condition of any maxim is that it "should conform to a universal law, and it is this conformity alone that the imperative properly represents as necessary."[37] In other

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[33] Kant, Critique of Practical Reason, p. 32. See also Ibid., pp. 32-33; 84-85; Kant, Fundamental Principles, pp. 30-31; 46; and Kant, Metaphysics of Morals, p. 12.

[34] Kant, Metaphysics of Morals, p. 25. See also Kant, Fundamental Principles, pp. 19; 38; and Kant, Critique of Practical Reason, p. 30.

[35] Kant, Fundamental Principles, p. 38 n. 7; Kant, Critique of Practical Reason, pp. 17; 18; 26; and Kant, Metaphysics of Morals, pp. 25-26. Kant gives several example of maxims in order to illustrate the application of the categorical imperative. Kant, Fundamental Principles, pp. 39-41. For Kant, principles are the foundation of all actions performed by rational beings since all rational beings "have the faculty of acting according to the conception of laws--that is, according to principles." Kant, Fundamental Principles, p. 30. See also Ibid., p. 44; Kant, Critique of Practical Reason, p. 32; and Kant, Metaphysics of Morals, pp. 25-26.

[36] Kant, Critique of Practical Reason, p. 31.

[37] Kant, Fundamental Principles, p. 30. See also Ibid., pp. 19; 20-21; 38; Kant,

words, the maxim of an action has to be fitted into this empty formal principle and must be fit to serve as the model for a universal type of law-giving which is to hold for others as well as for the agent.[38] Only maxims which qualify for universal legislation and so conform to the moral law are morally legitimate, and those which do not qualify for such universal legislation must be rejected.[39]

Kant argues, however, that this formulation of the categorical imperative[40] is not an applicable criterion for testing whether or not maxims are of a morally legitimate kind. For Kant, if "we wish to gain an entrance for the moral law,"[41] then "we shall often have to take as our object the special nature of man, which can be known only by experience, in order to show the implications of the universal moral principles for

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Critique of Practical Reason, pp. 26; 31; 33; 35; and Kant, Metaphysics of Morals, pp. 12; 25.

[38] Kant, Fundamental Principles, p. 20.

[39] Ibid, p. 21. For Kant, maxims that qualify for universal legislation are "practically right" and "objectively valid;" and as objectively valid they are therefore "objective, or practical laws." Kant, Critique of Practical Reason, p. 19; Kant, Metaphysics of Morals, p. 25; and Kant, Critique of Practical Reason, p. 17. See also Kant, Fundamental Principles, p. 46; and Kant, Critique of Practical Reason, pp. 26; 35. Kant also calls maxims that conform to universal law "objective maxims." Kant, Metaphysics of Morals, p. 12.

[40] This first formulation of the categorical imperative Kant calls the "general formula." There are three other formulations which are "modes of presenting" the general formula and are "so many formulae of the very same law, and each of itself involves the other two." Kant, Fundamental Principles, p. 53. For present purposes the second formulation (law of nature) will be used to illustrate the application of the categorical imperative. For a more detailed discussion on the different formulations see H. J. Paton, The Categorical Imperative (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1971), pp. 129-198.

[41] Kant, Fundamental Principles, p. 53.

human nature."[42] So "to decide whether an action which is possible for us in the sensuous world is or is not a case under the rule requires practical judgment, which applies what is asserted universally in a rule (in abstracto) to an action in concreto."[43] As it stands, then, the first formulation of the categorical imperative does not define the nature of that system of things by which the agent can determine whether any given maxim satisfies the universality requirement. In other words, it does not define what such a universal law would be a universal law of. Consequently, supplying the maxim of an action is not enough; in order for an action to be appraised, it also must be known what the maxim of the action will be a universal law of before its moral legitimacy can be determined. And since the concern is how the categorical imperative is applied to humans, an analogy relating to human experience is needed "to bring an idea of the reason nearer to intuition."[44]

It is in the second Critique that Kant clearly maintains that it is impossible to apply the moral law unless it is thought of in terms of some mediating or concretizing principle (which Kant calls the type of the moral law), and thus speaks of the necessity of such a principle whereby the moral law can be made applicable in the empirical world as a criterion for determining whether maxims are morally legitimate.[45] The typified categorical imperative is this: "Act as if the maxim of thy action were to

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[42] Kant, Metaphysics of Morals, p. 16.

[43] Kant, Critique of Practical Reason, p. 70.

[44] Kant, Fundamental Principles, p. 53.

[45] Kant, Critique of Practical Reason, pp. 70-74.

become by thy will a universal law of nature."[46] And for Kant, this mediating principle is given by the understanding which "suppl[ies] to an idea of reason...a law. This law, as one which can be exhibited in concreto in objects of the senses, is a natural law."[47] Furthermore,

> even common sense judges in this way, for its most ordinary judgments, even those of experience, are always based on natural law. Thus it is always at hand,

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[46] Kant, Fundamental Principles, p. 38. See also Ibid., 54; and Kant, Critique of Practical Reason, p. 72.

[47] Kant, Critique of Practical Reason, pp. 71-72. "Reason has a right, and is even compelled, to use nature...as the type of judgment." Ibid., p. 73. Within this discussion Kant illustrates a mediation procedure by referring to the schematism which allows the transcendental categories of the understanding to be applied to the concrete data of sensory intuition. (It is in the first Critique that this mediation procedure is first discussed. Immanuel Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, unabridged ed., trans. Norman Kemp Smith [New York: St Martin's Press, 1965], pp. 180-187. The first formulation of the categorical imperative cannot be applied directly to maxims of action any more than the formal categories of the transcendental understanding can be applied to empirical data. The two types of mediation procedures, however, are not the same; "to the law of freedom (which is a causality not sensuously conditioned),...no schema can be supplied for the purpose of applying [the moral law] in concreto....[T]he moral law has no other cognitive faculty to mediate its application to objects of nature than the understanding (not the imagination); and the understanding can supply to an idea of reason not a schema of sensibility but a law." Ibid., p. 71. Since the moral law is a priori in origin and is based on the concept of rationality in general, it cannot be schematized and be made to function as a law of the world of nature. Such a mediation principle as a literal schema of the moral law would be declaring that a principle of the empirical world can become a constitutive part of a law that applies to non-human types of beings; and as was said, for Kant, the moral law applies to all types of rational beings: human and non-human. So even though a mediation procedure is necessary in order to apply the moral law to human beings and "to show the implications of the universal moral principles for human nature;...this will not detract from the purity of such laws nor cast any doubt on their a priori origin--that is to say, a metaphysics of morals cannot be founded on anthropology, although it can be applied to it." Kant, Metaphysics of Morals, p. 16. For a more detailed discussion on the law of nature as a type of the moral law see Paul Dietrichson, "Kant's Criteria of Universalizability," in Kant: Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals with Critical Essays, ed. Robert Paul Wolff (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc. 1969), pp. 165-184; and Paton, The Categorical Imperative, pp. 157-164.

> [and] in cases where the causality from freedom is to be judged, natural law serves...as the type of a law of freedom, for if common sense did not have something to use in actual experience as an example, it could make no use of the law of pure practical reason in applying it to that experience.[48]

And as a type of the moral law,

> I must realize clearly what the limited function of the typic is supposed to be. The only function it can properly serve is to supply the moral law with a nonconstitutive, purely heuristic, illustrative mediation-principle enabling me to make use of the moral law as a practical standard for appraising my material maxims....
>
> The purely formal principle of the moral law has no concreteness as a criterion for appraising my material maxims. I therefore devise a rational construct in the form of a fictional idea which in a symbolically concrete manner typifies the abstract principle of the moral law I want to apply,...without thereby in any way implying that I am describing any actual state of affairs when I characterize the typified moral law....The only device I can use is to restate the abstract principle of the categorical imperative so as to make it include reference to the idea of a purely hypothetical world of nature. The kind of world I shall have to conceive of--and conceive of as though I were a part of it--is one that would be like ours but capable of being arranged according to purely hypothetical...natural laws.[49]

Kant is speaking of a hypothetical world of nature rather than an actual one. This is evident by the way he begins the natural law formula: act as if the maxim were to become a universal law of nature[50] The natural law formula is similarly expressed by Kant in the second Critique.[51]

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[48] Kant, Critique of Practical Reason, p. 72. Kant also refers to the natural law as an analogy to the moral law. Kant, Fundamental Principles, pp. 54; 55. In fact, all three formulations of the moral law are referred to as analogies to the natural law. Ibid., p. 53.

[49] Dietrichson, "Kant's Criteria of Universalizability," pp. 176; 177; 178.

[50] Kant, Fundamental Principles, pp. 38; 53.

[51] Kant, Critique of Practical Reason, p. 72. According to Kant, "everyone does, in fact, decide by this rule whether actions are morally good or bad." Ibid.

Moreover, it appears that by "law of nature" Kant is not appealing to a causal law of nature but a teleological law of nature.[52] According to Paton,

> in nature causal law is not the only kind of law recognized by Kant.
>
> Even in the understanding of physical nature we may have to use another concept besides that of causal law--the concept, namely, of purpose or end....For the understanding of human nature the concept of purpose or end is...necessary; for it is an essential characteristic of human nature to set purposes before itself....When we are asked to [consider] a proposed maxim as a law of nature, we must [consider] it as a teleological law of nature; for it is a maxim of action, and action as such...is essentially purposive. Furthermore, we are asked to [consider] it primarily as a law of human nature [in order to do this empirical knowledge of human nature is requisite], even if we are setting it against the background of nature as a whole; and human nature must be regarded as essentially purposive....[And] to conceive human nature as governed by teleological law is to suppose a complete harmony of ends both within the race and within the individual. We can consider human nature as if there were such a systematic harmony of ends in accordance with a law of nature; and we can ask whether any proposed maxim, if it were made a law of nature, would fit into such a systematic harmony. Some maxims would destroy such a systematic harmony, while others would merely fail to foster it.[53]

As to how the categorical imperative is to be applied in appraising and determining whether a proposed maxim is morally legitimate, Kant's own illustrations reveal that his criterion of right action consists of two criteria or tests of universality

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[52] Kant, Fundamental Principles, pp. 50-53; 55.

[53] Paton, The Categorical Imperative, pp. 149; 151; 150. For Paton's complete interpretive account see Ibid., pp. 148-157;166-167. That human nature is essentially purposive and sets ends for itself (this being what differentiates human beings from animals), see Kant, Fundamental Principles, pp. 40; and 46-47 (Kant's teleology is more clearly revealed in the third formulation of the categorical imperative and is key in understanding the law of nature formula). Within the context of discussing the fourth formulation, Kant declares that "rational nature is distinguished from the rest of nature by this that it sets before itself an end." Ibid., p. 54. As for Kant's conception of a systematic harmony of ends (or, as he often refers to it, "kingdom of ends"), see Ibid., pp. 50-53; 55.

which a maxim must satisfy.[54]

The first test consists in asking whether a maxim could be consistently thought of or conceived without contradiction if made a universal teleological law of nature.[55] The question raised here is whether a universalized maxim would destroy a systematic harmony of human ends and purposes, or, as Kant states it, would be inconsistent with or "violate" the "idea" or "principle of humanity."[56] A teleological law of nature which would destroy a systematic harmony of ends could not be conceived because it would "necessarily contradict itself."[57] The contradiction lies in the fact that a systematic harmony of ends is fundamental to the concept of a teleological law of nature, and so a teleological law of nature which destroyed such a systematic harmony would be a self-contradictory law; and as a self-contradictory law it would be no law at all and therefore impossible to conceive as a law of nature. Maxims which cannot be conceived as teleological laws of nature because they would destroy a systematic harmony of human ends and purposes are not morally legitimate.

The second test consists in asking whether a maxim, if made a universal law of nature, can be willed without contradiction.[58] The question raised here is not whether a universalized maxim would destroy a systematic harmony of ends--since the maxim in

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[54] Kant, Fundamental Principles, pp. 38-41; 46-47.

[55] Ibid., pp. 39-40; 41.

[56] Ibid., pp. 46; 47.

[57] Ibid., p. 40. See also Ibid., pp. 39; 46-47.

[58] Ibid., pp. 40-41.

question can be conceived as a law of nature and so passes the first test--but whether it advances or harmonizes positively with a systematic harmony of purposes within the race and within the individual.[59] And a will which sought to realize a systematic harmony of ends[60] would contradict itself by willing a maxim, which did not further such a harmony, to become a universal law of nature.[61] Maxims which cannot be willed as teleological laws of nature because they would fail to further a systematic harmony of ends are not morally legitimate.

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[59] Ibid., pp. 47; 53.

[60] For Kant, a complete systematic harmony of ends and purposes is an ideal which must be striven for; and if it is to be realized, human ends and purposes must be advanced and not merely maintained through teleological laws of nature. Kant, Fundamental Principles, pp. 50-52; 55-56.

[61] There is another sense of "contradiction in will" that has to do with the agent willing a maxim to be a universal law while also willing that he be made an exception to it because of his own needs. It is a contradiction because in making himself an exception to the law, the law is no longer universal in its application but general and therefore not a law. In other words, the agent would be willing a universal law and at the same time willing that it only apply generally. The question raised here is whether the agent can will a maxim to be a universal law without making himself an exception to it based on his own needs. Kant, Fundamental Principles, pp. 40-42. In other discussions, however, the issue is clearly not the needs of the agent but human ends and purposes and the furthering of those ends. The question implied in these discussions is not whether the agent can will a maxim to be a universal law without making himself an exception to it; but rather, the question is whether the agent can will a maxim to be a universal law in light of human ends and purposes. Ibid., pp. 40; 47; Kant, Metaphysics of Morals, pp. 44-45; 108-111; 117-118. In delineating the problem of agency as it pertains to Kant, deciding which of the two senses of "contradiction in will" truly characterizes the second test of universality is not necessary, since the problem of agency arises with either sense of "contradiction in will." Because the teleological sense of "contradiction in will" seems the most predominant throughout Kant's ethical writings, it has been chosen here to characterize the second test of universality.

In sum, Kant's criterion of right action is the ideal systematic harmony of human ends;[62] and only maxims that meet both criteria of universality, that is, those which can be conceived (meaning, they do not destroy a systematic harmony of ends) and willed (meaning, they further such ends) are considered to be morally legitimate. Whereas, maxims that cannot be conceived (because they would destroy a systematic harmony of ends), or, can be conceived but not willed (because they do not further such ends) are not morally legitimate.[63]

In Chapter Three it was shown that subjectivity, defined in terms of character, is ineliminable and that human agency is essentially personal, in that, it is the agent's internalized conception of value which determines his actions. It was then shown how this account of agency poses a problem (the problem of agency) for consequentialist theories. As with consequentialist theories, the relationship between character and agency also poses a problem for Kant because of the level of objectivity at which the categorical imperative is applied: the level of the individual agent who has a character. The problem of agency arises because of Kant's criterion of right action which requires an agent always to act only on maxims that can be universalized, that is, maxims that meet both criteria of universality and so can be conceived and willed as teleological laws of nature. Because of Kant's criterion of right action the agent may be required to

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[62] Kant, Fundamental Principles, pp. 50-51; 53.

[63] For Kant's own examples of maxims that do and do not pass the two criteria (and which he calls "commands" and "prohibitions" respectively) see Kant, Fundamental Principles, pp. 36; 38-41. And "all duties [whether commands or prohibitions] depend as regards the nature of obligation...on the same principle." Ibid., p. 41.

act contrary to his character when so acting meets the universality criteria. The problem of agency arises because the agent is not allowed to act from his character--since acting from his character does not meet the criteria--and yet he is required to engage his agency. But in order for him to act, he must act from his internalized conception of value; and so by requiring him to act contrary to and therefore not from his character, a necessary condition of agency is threatened. Consequently, the agent is allowed to act in accordance with his character only when the maxim of his action satisfies the two criteria of universality; otherwise, when acting according to his character does not meet the criteria, in that, the maxim of his action cannot be universalized, he must be willing to act contrary to his character if so acting would meet the criteria.

In light of the account of human agency given in Chapter Three, requiring an agent to act contrary to her character threatens a necessary condition of agency. For it is the agent's character (when weakness of will and character change are not present factors) that provides her reasons for acting and determines her actions and what she ought to do. It is the agent's internalized conception of value that qualifies her agency and sets the boundaries for action, thus determining the possibilities and limitations of action for her. Therefore, in requiring the agent to perform actions that are contrary to her character, the agent is required to do what she cannot do, or be expected to do, since the condition for performing those actions is not present for her. And since it is the agent's character that determines what she ought to do, in order for the agent to perform certain kinds of actions she must be committed to certain values which make

those actions possible actions for the agent. Requiring an agent to act contrary to her character whenever this would meet the universality criteria results in an impersonal ought, in that, what the agent ought to do has nothing to do with her internalized conception of value. But as was shown, there is no impersonal ought, in that, the agent's action is an expression of her character and is something that she ought to do because she is committed to certain values. There is no ought other than the ought that arises from the agent's character. It is her internalized conception of value that determines what she ought to do.

Purely Impersonal Moral Theories: Requiring Agents to Act "Apart From" Their Character

Thus far, it was shown how the problem of agency arises for purely impersonal moral theories (both consequentialist theories and Kant) because of their criterion of right action which may require the agent to act contrary to his character. The problem arises because the agent is not allowed to act from his character--since acting from his character, either, does not produce the best (or good enough) state of affairs, or, it does not meet the universality criteria--and yet he is required to engage his agency. In requiring the agent to act contrary to and therefore not from his character, these theories threaten a necessary condition of agency (character) for the agent who has a character and weakness of will and character change are not present factors, meaning they require the agent to perform an action whose condition for performing is not present for him. The problem, however, does not arise only in a negative way for

these theories, meaning it does not arise only when the agent is required to act contrary to his character, but it also arises when the agent is required to act apart from his character.

Kant

In the previous section, it was shown that the problem of agency arises because of Kant's criterion of right action which may require the agent to act contrary to his character. The same problem, however, also arises in a different way and has to do with the morality of an action and not just whether it is objectively right. The problem of agency arises in a different way, in that, even if what is required by the agent's character conforms to what is required by the categorical imperative, meaning it is an action whose maxim meets the universality criteria, the agent is not allowed to act from his character. And in this case, it is not because the agent's action is not objectively right, but rather, it is because of what Kant says about what is to count as a moral action (i.e., the condition necessary for its morality).

What counts as a moral action for Kant is summed up in the "universal ethical command, 'Act in accordance with duty from duty.'"[64] A moral action is not one which merely accords with duty (is objectively right/lawful); but rather, "morality or moral worth, can be conceded only where the action occurs from duty, i.e., merely for the sake of the law."[65] The moral worth of an action lies

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[64] Kant, Metaphysics of Morals, p. 49.

[65] Kant, Critique of Practical Reason, p. 84. See also Kant, Fundamental Principles, pp. 15; 16; 17; 18; and Kant, Critique of Practical Reason, pp. 74; 122;

> in the principle of the will....For the will stands between its a priori principle, which is formal, and its a posteriori spring, which is material, as between two roads, and it must be determined by something, it follows that it must be determined by the formal principle of volition when an action is done from duty, in which case every material principle has been withdrawn from it....It is only what is connected with my will as a principle,...in other words, simply the law of itself.[66]

For Kant, when all material of the law is removed, "nothing remains except the mere form of giving universal law."[67] Universality is the essential characteristic of law in itself; and it is this a priori principle (formal principle of volition), the form of law as such, which must determine the will when an action is done from duty. But what does it mean for the will to be determined by the principle of universality or to act from duty (for the sake of the law)?

Before an explanation can be given, it is important at this juncture to point out one sense in which Kant's criterion of right action is impersonal so as to gain a clearer understanding of what he means by an action done from duty or for the sake of the law. Kant's criterion of right action is impersonal in the sense that it is an objective criterion, in that, the rightness of an action has nothing to do with the individual agent[68] (unlike subjectivism). As was shown, for Kant, an action is right only if its maxim can be universalized and not because the individual agent thinks it's right--universality is

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[66] Kant, Fundamental Principles, p. 18. See also Kant, Critique of Practical Reason, pp. 74; 75.

[67] Kant, Critique of Practical Reason, p. 26. See also Ibid., pp. 28-29; and Kant, Fundamental Principles, p. 19.

[68] Meaning, the empirically constituted agent and not Kant's sense of agent as rational will.

the objective criterion of right action. The rightness of an action, then, is generated by a detachment from the standpoint of the individual agent and, therefore, is impersonally justified. This impersonal/objective point of view provides a standpoint of choice from which all choosers can agree as to what is right.[69]

For Kant, to act from duty means that "the objective determining ground [of action] must at the same time be the exclusive and subjectively sufficient determining ground of action."[70] In other words, "the form of universality, which reason requires as condition for giving to [any] maxim the objective validity of law, is itself the [subjective] determining ground of the will."[71] Here, Kant is talking about the incentive when he speaks in terms of the subjective determining ground.[72] So when Kant says of an action done from duty that the objective determining ground is also the subjective ground of determination he means that "the moral law [universality]....is the incentive to this action."[73] That is, the action is done because it can be universalized --because it is an embodiment of the moral law.[74] And as was said, Kant offers an

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[69] The problem of agency arises for Kant and others because of the type of objective moral theories they have, and not because they are objective. In Chapter Five it will be shown that the issue is not objectivity.

[70] Kant, Critique of Practical Reason, pp. 74-75. See also Ibid., pp. 78; 122.

[71] Ibid., p. 35.

[72] Ibid., pp. 74; 78.

[73] Ibid., p. 78. See also Ibid., pp. 74; 84-85; 121; 155. Kant also speaks in terms of the moral law as being the "determining motive." Ibid., p. 91. See also Metaphysics of Morals, pp. 45; 49.

[74] Kant, Metaphysical Principles, p. 15.

objective criterion of right action, in that, the rightness of an action is impersonally justified. Thus, an action done from duty (a moral action) is an action which is done from an impersonal standpoint: the standpoint of objectivity. In other words, the fact that the action can be impersonally justified--justified from a standpoint which is detached from the standpoint of the individual agent--is the reason why the action is done. It is important here to distinguish legitimate reasons for acting and reasons why an agent does act. The former concerns the justification for acting while the latter concerns the motivation. Because of the type of objective moral theory Kant has, the motivation for acting is impersonal since the reason for acting (justification) is also the reason why the agent acts (motivation). Consequently, Kant's theory is impersonal not only in the sense that it is an objective one, but also in the sense that moral agency is impersonal.[75]

In light of this, the connection between Kant's criterion of right action and a moral action is evident. Although the moral law is a criterion for determining whether an action is objectively right and not a criterion for determining whether an action is moral, it enjoins moral goodness. When the moral law is applied as a decision-making procedure it becomes the reason for performing the action, that is, the agent decides upon his action by this criterion; and it is the agent's acting on this (impersonal) reason that makes the action not only objectively right but also moral. At the outset of the present section it was said that the problem of agency arises for Kant because of his

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[75] As was shown in the previous section, this is manifested in a negative way when the agent is required to act contrary to (and therefore not from) his character.

criterion of right action which may require the agent to act contrary to his character and that the same problem also arises in a different way which has to do with the morality of an action. But as we have seen, the morality of an action is ultimately related to Kant's criterion of right action, and so the problem of agency arises in this different way also because of Kant's criterion of right action.

Now based on what Kant says about what is to count as a moral action, even if what is required by the agent's character meets the universality criteria and so accords with the law (is objectively right), the agent cannot act from the standpoint of his character--since to act from this standpoint would not be to act for the sake of the law: from a standpoint which is detached from the standpoint of the individual agent (the standpoint of objectivity)--but must act from an impersonal standpoint (apart from his character) if his action is to count as moral as well as lawful.[76] In requiring the agent to act from an impersonal/objective standpoint, Kant is requiring him to act from a radically free standpoint, that is, to act from a standpoint which is independent of his finite self.

> Duty!....It cannot be less than something which elevates man above himself as a part of the world of sense, something which connects him with an order of things which only the understanding can think and which has under it the entire world of sense, including the empirically determinable existence of man in time, and the whole system of all ends which is alone suitable to such unconditional practical laws as the moral. It is nothing else than personality, i.e., the freedom and independence from the mechanism of nature regarded as a capacity of a being

[76] And since what is required by the agent's character is objectively right, Kant would say that the agent is acting in accordance with (and not contrary to) his character when acting morally. But even though the agent may be acting in accordance with his character, this should not be taken to mean that he is acting from his character. As was seen in Kant's reference to the law, acting in accordance with the law and acting from the law are not the same.

> which is subject to special laws,...so that the person as belonging to the world of sense is subject to his own personality so far as he belongs to the intelligible world....[T]his elevation is inseparably present in the consciousness of the law as an incentive of a faculty which rules over the sensibility.[77]

But this is precisely what the agent cannot do. As was shown, human agency is essentially personal, in that, the agent acts from a subjective standpoint: the standpoint of his character.[78] There are no impersonal reasons in terms of why the agent acts. The agent is a determinative being which is the result of his self-determination. In

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[77] Kant, Critique of Practical Reason, pp. 89; 163. See also Ibid., pp. 91; 98; 100; 101; 103; 119; 156; and Kant, Fundamental Principles, pp. 68-69; 70-72; 74-76. In some passages Kant seems to be positing a metaphysical entity and in others he speaks in terms of a standpoint. The problem of agency applies to Kant regardless of whether he is referring to a metaphysical entity or a standpoint from which the agent acts.

For Kant, an action done from the standpoint of objectivity is a virtuous action (Kant, Critique of Practical Reason, pp. 155; 156; 160; and Kant, Metaphysics of Morals, pp. 19; 37; 53; 54; 70) and "it is one's duty to push the cultivation of his will up to the purest virtuous disposition, in which the law is at the same time the incentive of one's actions which are in accordance with duty, and is obeyed from duty" (this is clearly not an Aristotelian conception of virtue). Ibid., p. 45. See also Ibid., p. 51. Here it is important to note Kant's distinction between duties of virtue (which are differentiated from juridical duties) and the virtuous disposition which should accompany all duties. Ibid., pp. 19; 53-54. "Both [kinds of duties] include the concept of constraint, either self-constraint or constraint by others. The moral power of self-constraint may be called virtue, and the action springing from such a disposition (respect for the law) may be called a virtuous action, though the law expresses a juridical duty....[So] what it is virtuous to do is not on that account properly a duty of virtue. The former can only concern the formal element of the maxims; the latter, however, concerns their matter, namely, an end which is at the same time conceived as a duty." Ibid., p. 53. And for Kant there are many duties but "there is only one virtuous disposition insofar as it is the subjective ground determining one to fulfill his duty, a disposition extending also to juridical duties, which hence cannot bear the name of duties of virtue." Ibid., p. 70. On Kant and virtue see Robert Louden, "Kant's Virtue Ethics," Philosophy 61 (1986):473-489; and Onora O'Neill, "Kant after Virtue," Inquiry 26 (1984):387-405.

[78] And as was said, even when the agent is not acting from his character but contrary to it due to weakness of will and character change, the agent is still acting from a subjective standpoint: the standpoint of the empirically constituted self.

other words, through his chosen actions the agent acquires a character,[79] and it is this character that defines his identity and makes him an identifiable self. And as was shown, the agent acts from his determinative or constitutive self, that is, he acts from his internalized conception of value. The agent does not act justly because the value that the action expresses (justice) can be impersonally justified; rather, the agent acts justly because he values justice. Moreover, the philanthropist who assists others but does not want to because of her own problems is not acting from an impersonal standpoint (from duty) as Kant maintains[80] but is acting from her character. She is

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[79] It is imperative here to understand that in acquiring a character the agent is not acting from an impersonal standpoint. In order to account for certain types of phenomena such as weakness of will and character change, it was said that subjectivity, defined in terms of character is not a necessary condition of agency in the sense that it is a condition which is necessary in order for the agent to be able to act. Rather, subjectivity, defined in terms of the standpoint of the empirically constituted agent is a necessary condition of agency. In other words, there is a necessary relation between the standpoint of the concrete agent and agency, in that, it is impossible for the agent to act unless he is acting from the standpoint of his empirical self. In the case of acquiring a character, the agent is not acting from a standpoint which is detached from the standpoint of the empirical self meaning, it is still the empirical agent which chooses and acts. Consequently, it is possible for the agent to act (even though a character has not been acquired), but in order for the agent to engage his agency, he must act from a subjective standpoint--the standpoint of the empirical self. Again, the focus of the present work is subjectivity, defined in terms of character--defined in terms of the agent's internalized conception of value--and its relation to agency.

[80] Kant, Fundamental Principles, p. 16. The same also applies to Kant's example of an honest man. Kant, Critique of Practical Reason, pp. 159-160. In light of the account of agency given in Chapter Three, the philanthropist who is tempted not to assist others is under a duty. She is under a duty because of her internalized conception of value. It should be noted, that a distinction is being made here between ought and duty. As was stated, the agent's character renders an ought in the sense that it is a determinant of action; however the agent's character renders a duty when the agent is tempted to act contrary to her character. There is no sense of duty other than that which arises from the agent's character.

assisting others because it is something that she values and not because the value of beneficence can be impersonally justified. The agent is not free in an indeterminate sense, that is, she is not radically free--free from her determinative self. In other words, there is no indeterminant (transcendental) self--a self that cannot be determined by the agent's actions--which acts. The empirically constituted self is the only self and it is the only standpoint from which the agent acts.

Kant's view of the moral self as indeterminate means that the concept of character (as characterized in Chapters Two and Three) has no importance. The determinative self is what must be transcended to act freely and thus morally. The whole point is to dismantle character; thus, character is not something to be developed but overcome.[81]

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[81] This is evident in his discussion of moral education. Kant, Critique of Practical Reason, pp. 155-168. If character is to be overcome, then how does the agent determine what is morally relevant in a situation? Put differently, how does the agent know when moral judgment is even necessary? Joel Kupperman sees this as a problem for Kant and points out that without the notion of character Kant's own theory cannot be applied. Before the categorical imperative can be applied in determining the rightness of an action, the agent must have some moral conception or understanding of her actions so as to enable her to decide whether moral judgment is needed. Joel Kupperman, "Character and Ethical Theory," in Midwest Studies in Philosophy, vol. 13, pp. 115-125. While concurring with Kupperman that character is requisite in order to apply the categorical imperative, Barbara Herman argues that Kant himself recognizes this and supports this account of the practice of moral judgment. Barbara Herman, "The Practice of Moral Judgment," Journal of Philosophy (1985):414-436. Even if Kant supports this account, character development would only be a means by which the categorical imperative can be applied. And as was shown, when it is applied as a decision-making procedure the moral law becomes the reason for performing the action; consequently, the agent's action has nothing to do with her character. In light of this account of moral judgment, character, oddly enough, makes the realization of the impersonal motive in action possible.

Some neo-Kantians, however, offer a non-rigoristic interpretation of Kant which is mostly based on the second part of the Metaphysics of Morals: The Doctrine of Virtue. Here, the claim is that Kant encourages character development when he speaks in terms of ends that are also duties, and that these ends should become our ends (values to be inculcated).[82] Based on what Kant says about what is to count as a moral action, even if it is granted that Kant encourages character development, the agent cannot act from the standpoint of her character since "what is essential in the moral worth of actions is that the moral law should directly [emphasis mine] determine the will."[83] The agent must act from the standpoint of objectivity, that is, the actions must be performed because they can be impersonally justified and not because they express what the agent values. For Kant, the agent's character can play only an instrumental role, in that, the inculcation of certain values may support right actions and make it easier for the agent to act as duty requires; but actions done from the standpoint of the agent's character are not moral. It also can be argued that, for Kant, the agent whose character "cooperate[s] with the motive of duty has a desirable kind of internal unity; it is a good thing, from the agent's point of view, that internal struggle over doing what

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[82] Louden, "Kant's Virtue Ethics," pp. 482-489.

[83] Kant, Critique of Practical Reason, 74. See also Ibid., p. 121. Again, it is important to keep in mind the distinction Kant makes between virtues (ends which are also duties) and the virtuous disposition. "[T]here are many duties of virtue but only one [emphasis mine] obligation of virtue." Kant, Metaphysics of Morals, p. 70. See also Ibid., pp. 19; 53-54. This distinction is key in understanding the place (if any) Kant gives to character development.

is right is diminished."[84] Even if character development is necessary for the internal unity of the agent, based on Kant's characterization of a moral action, even if the agent's character cooperates with what is required by the moral law, the agent can act only in accordance with her character and not from the standpoint of her character.

The problem of agency arises because the agent is not allowed to act from her character (if the action is to count as moral) and yet she is required to engage her agency. Here, the problem of agency does not arise because the agent is required to act contrary to her character, but rather, it arises because the agent is required to act apart from her character. But in order for her to engage her agency, she must act from her internalized conception of value; therefore, a necessary condition of agency is threatened when the agent is required to act and to do so apart from her character.[85]

Act-Consequentialist Theories:

Maximizing and Satisficing

It was shown that the problem of agency arises for consequentialist theories because of their criterion of right action which may require the agent to act contrary to and therefore not from his character. As with Kant, the problem does not arise only in

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[84] Barbara Herman, "Integrity and Impartiality," Monist 66 (April 1983):237. See also Barbara Herman, "Acting from the Motive of Duty," Philosophical Review, 90 (July 1981):376-382.

[85] Again, the concern here is with the individual agent who has a character and weakness of will or character change are not present factors. When these are not present factors character is a determinant of action, in that, the agent acts from his internalized conception of value. And it is in this sense that character can be said to be a condition that is necessary in order for the agent to act.

a negative way for consequentialism, meaning it does not arise only when the agent is required to act contrary to his character. The problem of agency also arises in a different way, in that, even if what is required by the agent's character produces the best state of affairs or that which is good enough, the agent is not allowed to act from his character. And again, it is not because the agent's action is not objectively right--since it is an action that produces the best (or good enough) state of affairs--but rather, it is because of the consequentialist criterion of right action.

Although conceptually different from Kant, consequentialism (both maximizing and statisficing) also offers a criterion of right action which is impersonal. The consequentialist criterion is impersonal in the sense that it is objective, meaning the reason for acting does not end with a reference to the individual agent and what he is committed to. For consequentialist theories (both maximizing and satisficing) the rightness of an act is judged by the state of affairs or consequences it produces in terms of the good.[86] After states of affairs have been impersonally ranked according to the amount of good produced, maximizing types of consequentialism require the agent to perform the action that produces the best (highest ranked) state of affairs, that is, the one that is optimific in terms of maximizing goodness.[87] Satisficing consequentialism,

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[86] And depending on the type of consequentialist theory, the good may be defined in terms of happiness or preference satisfaction (subjective versions of utilitarianism), or, it may be defined in terms of other values that enhance welfare but are not dependent on the subjective states of agents (objective utilitarianism), or, it may be defined in terms of other values that are independent of subjective or objective conceptions of welfare. These types of consequentialism may be either maximizing or satisficing in terms of the amount of good produced.

[87] Even though maximizing consequentialist theories differ as to their conception

on the other hand, requires the agent to perform the action which produces that state of affairs which is good enough[88] in relation to the best state of affairs that could be produced. Maximizing and satisficing consequentialism may not share the same conception of the right[89] but they both judge the rightness of an act impersonally, that is, solely by the state of affairs it produces. For maximizing consequentialism, producing the best state of affairs is the objective criterion of right action, and for satisficing consequentialism, producing that state of affairs which is good enough is the objective criterion of right action. So for both maximizing and satisficing consequentialism, the rightness of an action is impersonally justified, in that, it is generated by a detachment from the standpoint of the individual agent. And this objective point of view provides a standpoint of choice from which all choosers can agree as to what is right.

Like Kant, consequentialists are concerned with the question "what is the right thing to do?" Unlike Kant, however, the answer to the question for consequentialists is to be found in that action which produces the best (or good enough) state of affairs. These are the considerations the agent should use and think about in deliberating about what to do. But using and thinking about consequentialist considerations has

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of the good, they all share the same criterion of right action and require the agent always to perform the act which produces the best state of affairs.

[88] And for Slote, the action that is good enough is the one which produces more good than all the other alternative actions in relation to the best action that could be performed.

[89] They may, however, share the same conception of the good.

implications for the content of the agent's motives. When the consequentialist criterion is used to guide the agent's action it becomes the reason for performing the action, that is, the agent decides upon his action by this criterion. The action, then, is done because it produces the best (or good enough) state of affairs--because it is an embodiment of the consequentialist criterion. And as was said, consequentialism offers an objective criterion of right action, in that, the rightness of an action is impersonally justified. Therefore, when the consequentialist criterion is used in deliberation about what to do, the action is done because it produces the best (or good enough) state of affairs and so it is an action which is done from an impersonal standpoint: the standpoint of objectivity. So the fact that the action can be impersonally justified--justified from a standpoint which is detached from the standpoint of the individual agent--is the reason why the action is done. As with Kant, the justification for acting (i.e., the legitimate reason for acting) is also the motivation (i.e., the reason why) for acting. Consequentialism, then, is impersonal not only in the sense that it offers a criterion of right action which is objective, but also in the sense that moral agency is impersonal.

In light of this, even if what is required by the agent's character meets the consequentialist criterion, meaning it is an action that produces the best (or good enough) state of affairs, the agent, in applying consequentialism as a guide to moral decisions, is acting from an impersonal standpoint and not from the standpoint of his character.[90] And in acting from the standpoint of objectivity, the agent is acting from a

[90] And since what is required by the agent's character is objectively right, the

radically free standpoint--a standpoint which is independent of his determinative self.

According to Nagel,

> "the self [i.e. the self that decides directly among impersonal states of affairs] that is so guided is the objective self, which regards the world impersonally, as a place containing TN [Thomas Nagel] and his actions, among other things. It is detached from the perspective of TN, for it views the world from nowhere within it."[91]

Nagel here is speaking in terms of what considerations[92] the agent should use to guide his actions, and so producing the best state of affairs is not only the reason for action (justification) but is also the reason why (motivation) the agent acts.[93] In other words, the agent must consciously adopt the objective standpoint and transcend his

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agent is acting in accordance with (and not contrary to) his character, but he is not acting from his character.

[91] Nagel, View, p. 183. See also Ibid., pp. 185; 189. Here, Nagel upholds a dualistic conception of the self (his affinity with Kant is evident). The "divisions of the self," (Nagel, Ibid., p. 189) however, are not rendered metaphysically by Nagel (as they are at times by Kant); but rather, these are two "different points of view:" the external and the internal perspective. Ibid., pp. 185; 183. "Each of us is not only [emphasis mine] an objective self but a particular person with a particular perspective; we act in the world from that perspective, and not only [emphasis mine] from the point of view of a detached will, selecting and rejecting world states." Ibid., p. 183. This duality is also espoused by Hare who proposes a dual-level conception of morality (and the difference between Hare and Nagel is that Hare is offering a strictly consequentialist theory). For Hare, there are two levels of moral thinking: the intuitive level and the critical level. The intuitive moral thinking level is the level of the individual agent (the standpoint of the prole) and the critical moral thinking level is a level which abstracts from the individual agent: the level at which act-consequentialism is applied as a decision-procedure (the standpoint of the archangel). As with Nagel, these are standpoints and not two metaphysical entities. Hare, Moral Thinking, pp. 25; 44-64.

[92] For Nagel, consequentialism is not the only consideration the agent should use to guide his actions. As was shown in Chapter One, Nagel offers a heterogeneous conception of morality inclusive of both consequentialism and deontology.

[93] Nagel, View, pp. 189; 191.

determinative self. Consequently, the concept of character has no real importance for consequentialist theories. The agent's character can play only an instrumental role, in that, the inculcation of certain values may support right actions and make it easier for the agent to fulfill consequentialist demands, but the agent in applying consequentialism would be acting only in accordance with his character and not from the standpoint of her character.

The problem of agency arises for consequentialist theories because the agent, in applying the consequentialist criterion of right action, is not allowed to act from the standpoint of his character and yet he is required to engage his agency. Here, the problem of agency does not arise because the agent is required to act contrary to his character, but rather, it arises because the agent is required to act apart from his character. But in order for the agent to engage his agency (and weakness of will and character change are not present factors), he must act from the standpoint of his character. Consequently, a necessary condition of agency is threatened when the agent is required to act and to do so apart from his character.

In summation, the problem of agency arises for purely impersonal theories (consequentialism and Kant) because of their criterion of right action, which, when applied, requires the agent to act either contrary to or apart from her character. The problem of agency points to the fundamental assumption these conceptions of morality have regarding moral agency: the assumption that moral agency is impersonal and that what the agent ought to do has nothing to do with his character.

Self-effacing[94] Act-Consequentialism: A Response to the Problem of Agency

With regard to the problem of agency, consequentialists have recourse to a certain kind of defense[95] which can meet the charge that consequentialism (maximizing or satisficing) threatens a necessary condition of agency by requiring the agent to act either contrary to or apart from her character. If the subjective standpoint is a necessary condition of human agency and if the application of consequentialism threatens this condition of agency by requiring the agent to act from an impersonal standpoint--by requiring her to act either contrary to or apart from her character--then consequentialism may have a "self-effacing" character. That is, it would be better on consequentialist grounds if there was widespread ignorance of the correctness of the consequentialist conception of the right. Such ignorance, therefore, would preclude the acknowledgement and application of the consequentialist conception of morality.

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[94] The term "self-effacing" has been coined by Derek Parfit to refer to a type of consequentialism. Parfit, Reasons and Persons, pp. 40-43.

[95] This consequentialist defense also can be used as a rebuttle to other practical difficulties that arise from applying consequentialism such as: the self-defeating nature of consequentialism (Parfit, Reasons and Persons, p. 49; and Henry Sidgwick, The Methods of Ethics, 6th ed. [London: Macmillan and Co., 1901], pp. 405; 413); the problem of justice (Williams, Morality: An Introduction to Ethics, [New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1972], pp. 104-105); issues concerning friendship and love (Langenfus, "Conscience," pp. 133-134; Kapur, "Consequentialism and Friendship," p. 495; and Stocker, "Schizophrenia," pp. 457-458. Stocker discusses the self-effacing character of egoism); the problem of integrity (as delineated in Chapter Two) (Langenfus, "Conscience," pp. 133-134; Langenfus, "Self-effacing Consequentialism," pp. 479-480; Parfit, Reasons and Persons, p. 49; and Scheffler, The Rejection of Consequentialism, pp. 43-44; 48); and the problem of alienation (as delineated by Williams). Smart and Williams, For and Against, pp. 108-135; and Langenfus, "Conscience," pp. 133-134.

The self-effacing thesis is a claim about moral beliefs. "So not only would the pure consequentialist motivation be rejected for agents generally, but also the pure (ultimate) consequentialist belief."[96] In other words, on consequentialist terms, agents generally cannot believe consequentialism to be true (even though it is) but must believe it to be false at the level of belief. For Sidgwick, if circumstances are such that the application of utilitarianism would not result in general happiness, then,

> on Utilitarian principles, it may be right to do and privately recommend, under certain circumstances, what it would not be right to advocate openly;...it may be conceivably right to do, if it can be done with comparative secrecy, what it would be wrong to do in the face of the world; and even, if perfect secrecy can be reasonably expected, what it would be wrong to recommend by private advice or example. These conclusions are all of a paradoxical character: there is no doubt that the moral consciousness of a plain man broadly repudiates the general notion of an esoteric morality, differing from that popularly taught; and it would be commonly agreed that an action which would be bad if done openly is not rendered good by secrecy. We may observe, however, that there are strong utilitarian reasons for maintaining generally this latter common opinion; for it is obviously advantageous...that acts which it is expedient to repress by social disapprobation should become known, as otherwise the disapprobation cannot operate; so that it seems inexpedient to support by any moral encouragement the natural disposition of men in general to conceal their wrong doings; besides that the concealment would in most cases have importantly injurious effects on the agent's habits of veracity. Thus the Utilitarian conclusion...would seem to be this; that the opinion that secrecy may render an action right which would not otherwise be so should itself be kept comparatively secret; and similarly it seems expedient that the doctrine that esoteric morality is expedient should itself be kept esoteric....And thus a Utilitarian may reasonably desire, on Utilitarian principles, that...[utilitarianism] should be rejected by mankind generally.[97]

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[96] Langenfus, "Conscience," p. 139. See also Brink, "Utilitarian Morality and the Personal Point of View," p. 429; Kapur, "Consequentialism and Friendship," p. 495; Langenfus, "Self-effacing Consequentialism," pp. 479-480; Parfit, Reasons and Persons, p. 40; Railton, "Alienation," pp. 145-146; Scheffler, The Rejection of Consequentialism, p. 43; Sidgwick, The Methods of Ethics, pp. 487-488; Smart and Williams, For and Against, pp. 134-135; and Williams, Morality, pp. 106-107.

[97] Sidgwick, The Methods of Ethics, pp. 487-488.

For Brink, if the circumstances are such that a theory's

> recognition and application would satisfy the theory worse than recognition and application of some alternative theory, [then] the proper response of anyone, who, as theorist, believes the theory in question to be true, is to think that in those circumstances the true theory should be suppressed and some false theory recognized.[98]

What is being denied here by consequentialists is the common belief that moral theories play a role in practical reasoning and the regulation of actions. The self-effacement thesis illuminates what is important (to some consequentialists)[99] about a moral theory: that it sorts actions into appropriate deontic categories so as to render a doctrine or general account (which must be believed to be false) of what actions are right and wrong. Consequentialism only supplies the standard of the rightness and wrongness of

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[98] Brink, "Utilitarian Morality and the Personal Point of View," p. 429. According to Langenfus, the type of false moral conception to be believed and applied "must have the pluralistic, essentially non-consequentialist character of common-sense morality....The self-effacement thesis is here interpreted to require an exclusive inculcation of common-sense morality (including no ultimate consequentialist considerations)." Langenfus, "Self-effacing Consequentialism," p. 480. For a similar view see Sidgwick, The Methods of Ethics, Chapter Five. With regard to the problem of agency, however, the false theory to be believed and applied would have to be a theory that would not threaten a necessary condition of agency by requiring the agents to act contrary to or apart from their character.

[99] For other consequentialists and those who espouse a heterogeneous conception of morality which incorporates consequentialism, moral theory does play a role in practical deliberation. Those who believe it to play such a role are, to name a few, Bentham, Brink, Hare, Mill, Nagel, Railton, Scheffler, and Slote. Historically, it has been assumed by the opponents of consequentialism that consequentialism was being offered as a theory to be acknowledged and applied. Most of the arguments (past and present) levied against consequentialism have to do with the application of consequentialism. The problems are so formidable that even ad hoc modifications have failed to adequately resolve them. The self-effacement thesis is a convenient last ditch effort to safeguard the correctness of consequentialism while at the same time immunizing it from all practical problems by claiming that the theory was never meant to be acknowledged and applied in the first place.

actions but it does not supply a doctrine about the beliefs or motivations that agents should have. In other words, the criterion of the right--which in this case is act-consequentialism--itself plays no direct role in practical reasoning, that is, the consequentialist criterion cannot be the reason why an action is performed.[100] Rather, agents should have those beliefs and motivations it would be best to have on consequentialist grounds, even if this means the acceptance of a non-consequentialist conception of morality.[101]

In terms of how many individuals should acknowledge (at the level of belief) and apply the consequentialist criterion of right action, consequentialists believe, that, on consequentialist grounds, only a few individuals should accept and apply it directly. What is being proposed here is that the type of self-effacement thesis consequentialism itself would most likely support would not be a total or complete one, but rather it would be a partial self-effacement thesis. According to Langenfus,

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[100] Consequentialism under the self-effacement thesis may be practical in the sense of having an effective social role, but it is practical only in an indirect sort of way via the acceptance of another moral theory. Langenfus, "Self-effacing Consequentialism," pp. 490-491; and Parfit, Reasons and Persons, pp. 40-41.

[101] The self-effacement thesis has been restricted to the consequentialist moral tradition. Non-consequentialist theories typically have held that their theories not only specify criteria of right and wrong action but that they play a role in practical reasoning, thereby supplying the beliefs and motivations agents should have. And as was seen, for Kant, there is no split between the criterion of right action (categorical imperative) and the regulation of actions. The self-effacement thesis is not an option for Kant since a moral action is one which is done because it meets the universality criteria and not some other (false) criteria. The agent must consciously adopt the objective standpoint. This is the essential point of Kant's morality: that the agent act from a radically free standpoint. Brink, however, thinks that circumstances may be such that it would be better if the categorical imperative were believed to be false at the level of belief. Brink, "Utilitarianism and the Personal Point of View," p. 429 n. 27.

> the most plausible form of the self-effacement thesis is one which does not entail that all moral agents in society reject the consequentialist conception of the right. The thesis allows for the possibility that a limited number of certain individuals could have an exclusive, ultimate consequentialist belief concerning the basis of moral obligation as long as it does not become the moral conception generally accepted in society.[102]

This "theory would then be partly self-effacing, and partly esoteric, telling those who believe it not to enlighten the ignorant majority."[103] It would be partially self-effacing because it must be believed to be false by part of the population. It would be esoteric because it would be the secret exclusive criterion of right action for a limited few.[104]

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[102] Langenfus, "Self-effacing Consequentialism," p. 481. Consequentialists, however, do not deny the possibility that consequentialism may be totally self-effacing. It remains an open question as to whether consequentialism would be partially or totally self-effacing. According to Williams, once this process has started "there seems nothing to stop, and a lot to encourage a movement by which [consequentialism] retires to the totally transcendental standpoint." Smart and Williams, For and Against, p. 35.

[103] Parfit, Reasons and Persons, p. 41. See also Kapur, "Consequentialism and Friendship," pp. 495-496; Sidgwick, The Methods of Ethics, pp. 487-488; Smart and Williams, For and Against, pp. 138-140; Williams, Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy, pp. 108-110; and Williams, Introduction to Morality, pp. 105-106.

[104] There is disagreement among consequentialists as to the social and intellectual status of the limited few. Some believe that the few who should accept and apply consequentialism should be the elite in society: those who have "exceptional qualities of intellect, temperament or character" (Sidgwick, The Methods of Ethics, p. 487)--most likely those who hold positions of political power. The elite few are contrasted with the "plain man" or "the vulgar." Ibid., p. 488. Kapur uses Hare's description of the archangel and the prole to distinguish the two classes of individuals (for Hare, however, these are not two different groups of people but two types of moral thinking represented in the same agent). Kapur, "Consequentialism and Friendship," pp. 495-496. Williams has coined this version of partial self-effacing consequentialism, "Government House." Williams, Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy, p. 108. For Williams, this version of the self-effacement thesis would render a situation that is "inherently manipulative, and would very probably demand institutions of coercion or severe political restriction to sustain itself." Smart and Williams, For and Against, p. 137. See also Amartya Sen and Bernard Williams, eds., Utilitarianism and Beyond (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), p. 16; and Williams, Introduction to Morality, pp. 105-106. Because of the negative consequences this version of the

The consequentialist may conclude, then, that the charge that consequentialism threatens a necessary condition of agency by requiring the agent to act from an impersonal standpoint is simply false. For the theory would not require that agents generally be aware of it. Instead, it would require the recognition and application of a (false) moral theory which would not require agents to act either contrary to or apart from their character.

The self-effacement thesis, as explicated here, should not be confused with dual-level consequentialism as presented by Hare and others.[105] Both self-effacing and dual-level types of theories are purely consequentialist in terms of the criterion of right

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self-effacement thesis would yield, some consequentialists believe that the limited few would not be those who hold political power or have any unique status in society, and that it is this version of the partial self-effacement thesis that would most likely be justified on consequentialist grounds. See Langenfus, "Self-effacing Consequentialism," pp. 485-487; and Parfit, Reasons and Persons, p. 42.

[105] An important background article is R. Eugene Bales, "Act-utilitarianism: Account of Right-making Characteristics or Decision-making Procedure?" American Philosophical Quarterly, 8 (July 1971):257-265. The clearest account of a dual-level type of consequentialism can be found in Hare's book Moral Thinking, pp. 25-26; 38-52. Hare does not take credit for introducing the distinction between two levels of moral thinking. He claims that the distinction can be found in Plato and Aristotle and that it was also used by classical utilitarians such as Mill (Utilitarianism, ch. 5) and John Rawls ("Two Concepts of Rules," Philosophical Review 64 [January 1955]:3-32). See also Brink, "Utilitarian Morality and the Personal Point of View," pp. 421; 424-427; 428-429; Kupperman, Character, chs. 4 and 5; Kupperman, Foundations of Morality (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1983); Philip Pettit and Geoffrey Brennan, "Restrictive Consequentialism," Australasian Journal of Philosophy 64 (December 1986):438-455; and Railton, "Alienation," pp. 142-145; 148-150; 152-154; 156-160. Railton discusses both dual-level hedonism (which he calls "objective hedonism") and dual-level consequentialism (which he calls "objective consequentialism"). It should be noted that dual-level types of theories differ as to their conception of the good. So a dual-level consequentialist theory may support a utilitarian (subjective or objective versions) or nonutilitarian conception of the good.

action, but this is where the similarity ends. Dual-level theories allow the acceptance (at the level of belief) of consequentialism as the ultimate criterion of right action and its application.[106] Dual-level theories are different from self-effacing (and single-level) consequentialist theories, in that, dual-level theories consist of two levels or modes of normative moral thinking. These two levels of thought do not represent a distinction between two groups of people as is the case with partial self-effacing theories. The two levels of thought are represented in the same agent--the distinction, therefore, is a psychological rather than a social one. At the higher level (the "critical thinking level" as Hare calls it), consequentialist deliberation occurs for the purpose of selecting a moral theory (that will produce the best state of affairs) which is to be applied at a lower level (the "intuitive thinking level"), and for considering particular situations directly so as to determine which action produces the best state of affairs. In other words, at the lower practical level, some other moral theory is applied[107] and so consequentialism (for the most part) does not play a direct role in moral reasoning; however, it can play a role in moral reasoning since it can be applied by the agent at any time bringing critical thinking to bear on a particular situation in order to decide

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[106] Within the context of dual-level theories its application is more limited than in single-level consequentialist theories.

[107] It is an empirical question as to which moral theory is to be adopted at the lower level and used in deliberation and choice. The theory must be justified on consequentialist grounds. See Brink, "Utilitarian Morality and the Personal Point of View," pp. 428-429; Hare, Moral Thinking, pp. 38; 43; 46-47; 48; 62; and Railton, "Alienation," pp. 156.

what to do.[108] For Hare,

> the intuitive and critical levels of thinking are both...concerned with moral questions of substance; but they handle them in different ways, each appropriate to the different circumstances in which, and purposes for which, the thinking is done.[109]

Even though both levels of moral thinking are needed, the critical thinking level--the level at which consequentialism is applied--has ultimate moral authority and total overridingness for it alone yields conclusions about which actions are right. And the moral theory to be applied at the intuitive level is based on those conclusions. Therefore, a moral theory is justified if applying it would maximize the chances of performing actions which are right.[110]

It is clear that the self-effacement thesis is much more radical and goes beyond dual-level theories. It is not merely a claim about applying a different moral theory at the level of practice. It is a claim about what is to be believed at the level of belief. And at the level of belief consequentialism cannot be accepted as the criterion of right action.[111]

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[108] Brink, "Utilitarian Morality and the Personal Point of View," pp. 425-426; 428; Hare, Moral Thinking, pp. 39; 41-43; 45; 47; 49-51; 59; and Railton, "Alienation," 152-155.

[109] Hare, Moral Thinking, p. 26. See also Ibid., pp. 44; 52.

[110] Because dual-level theories are purely consquentialist in terms of the right, abiding by a moral theory at the intuitive level does not insure that an action is right, since a right action is one that produces the best state of affairs. So an agent may conform to a moral theory (which is justified on consequentialist grounds) but still perform the wrong action. Dual-level theories, then, do not offer a disjunctive theory of the right.

[111] Dual-level consequentialist theories are meant to mitigate (though not as well as self-effacing ones) problems that are raised against single-level types of

Does the self-effacement thesis meet the charge that consequentialism threatens a necessary condition of agency? Partial self-effacing (maximizing or satisficing) does not avoid the problem of agency. Even if the (false) theory to be believed and applied by agents generally is one that does avoid the problem, that is, it is a theory that does not require agents to act from an impersonal standpoint, the problem of agency arises in relation to the few, who at the level of belief, accept the consequentialist criterion of right action. The problem arises for them because consequentialism plays a direct role in practical deliberation; and in playing such a role, consequentialism will require them

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consequentialism such as: the self-defeating nature of consequentialism; the problem of justice; issues concerning love and friendship; the problem of integrity; and the alienation problem. See Brink, "Utilitarian Morality and the Personal Point of View," pp. 423-424; 427; 435; Hare, Moral Thinking, pp. 36-38; 44-52; Primorac, "Hare on Moral Conflicts," pp. 171-175; and Railton, "Alienation." Even though these particular problems do not arise, other problems arise which are unique to the conceptual structure of dual-level theories. For a discussion of these problems see Darwall, "Agent-centered Restrictions," pp. 312-313; Langenfus, "Conscience," pp. 135-137; J. L. Mackie, Persons and Values (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), pp. 189-191; 201; T. M. Scanlon, "Levels of Moral Thinking," in Hare and Critics, eds. Douglas Seanor and N. Fotion (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), pp. 130-133; Sen and Williams, "Utilitarianism and Beyond," pp. 15-16; Wilcox, "Egoists, Consequentialists and Their Friends," pp. 80-83; Williams, Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy, pp. 106-110; Williams, "Self-indulgence," pp. 51-53; and Williams, "The Structure of Hare's Theory," in Hare and Critics, pp. 188-190. According to Langenfus, it is because of these problems that the self-effacement thesis requires a belief that another moral theory is correct (a theory which does not include an ultimate consequentialist criterion of right action). Langenfus, "Self-effacing Consequentialism," p. 481. In addition to these problems, dual-level theories--because of their conceptual structure--also face the problem of agency. Since the consequentialist criterion can play a role in moral reasoning, the agent may be required to act either contrary to or apart from her character. So even if the moral theory which is to be applied at the intuitive level is one that does not require the agent to act contrary to or apart from her character, the direct application of the consequentialist criterion would. And as was argued with regard to both single-level consequentialism (both maximizing and satisficing types) and Kant, this requirement threatens a necessary condition of agency.

to act either contrary to or apart from their character--thus threatening a necessary condition of agency.

The only type of self-effacement thesis that could avoid the problem is a total self-effacement thesis--the type of thesis which entails that all agents in society reject the consequentialist conception of the right, meaning consequentialism cannot be accepted by anyone at the level of belief. This would also mean that no one can believe the total self-effacement thesis itself at the level of belief, since this belief would also involve the belief that consequentialism is the true criterion of right action (since the total self-effacement thesis entails the assumption that consequentialism is true). But the fact that consequentialism is true is precisely what cannot be believed by anyone under a total self-effacement thesis. As Sidgwick put it, "the doctrine that esoteric morality is expedient should itself be kept esoteric."[112]

In upholding a radical separation between the valid criterion of right action and motivation, consequentialists must pay a very high price--relinquishing their only "distinctive contribution".[113] Under a partial self-effacement thesis, consequentialism is indirectly practical and can have an effective social role. This role is possible since the few who accept and apply consequentialism directly are the ones that provide the (false)

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[112] Sidgwick, The Methods of Ethics, p. 488. Moreover, the problem of agency would also arise for the agent who believes the total self-effacement thesis since in believing this she would also believe that consequentialism is true. And as was said, the only way consequentialism can avoid the problem is if no one accepts it as the valid criterion of right action.

[113] Smart and Williams, For and Against, p. 124.

moral theory[114] (which is justified on consequentialist grounds) which is to be believed and applied by agents generally.[115] This acceptance, by the few, is necessary if consequentialism is to be practically effective. Under a total self-effacement thesis, however, consequentialism is not practical at all. It plays no social role since no one accepts it as having ultimate moral status.[116] According to Williams,

> There is no distinctive place for...[consequentialism][117] unless it is a doctrine about how one should decide what to do. This is because its distinctive doctrine is about what acts are right, and, especially for [consequentialism], the only distinctive interest or point of the question what acts are right, relates to the situation of deciding to do them....[I]f [consequentialism] determines nothing of how thought in the world is conducted,...then I hold that [consequentialism] has disappeared, and that the residual position is not worth calling [consequentialism]....[And if consequentialism] has to vanish from making any distinctive mark in the world,...then I leave it for discussion whether that shows that [consequentialism] is unacceptable, or merely that no one ought to accept it.[118]

For some, this self-effacing form of consequentialism--which requires total suppression--is unacceptable as a moral theory.[119] An adequate moral theory must

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[114] This also includes revisions to the false theory when such revisions are justified on the basis of utility. Moreover, it could be possible under certain circumstances that another false theory could replace an existing false theory if the latter no longer produced the best (or good enough) state of affairs.

[115] Langenfus, "Self-effacing Consequentialism," pp. 482-487; 490-491; and Parfit, Reasons and Persons, pp. 41; 42.

[116] Langenfus, "Self-effacing Consequentialism," pp. 481-482; and Parfit, Reasons and Persons, pp. 41-42.

[117] Although Williams' criticism is levied against utilitarianism, it can certainly be applied to consequentialism in general.

[118] Smart and Williams, For and Against, pp. 128; 135. See also Ibid., pp. 124-125.

[119] Since "the adoption of the principle would preclude the promotion of certain good consequences, and would probably have worse consequences," consequentialism

provide a standard which can be taught and accepted publicly as a justification of actions without violating the theory itself.[120] In other words, the adequacy of a moral theory is judged by its normative role--its ability to guide agents in living their lives.

On the other hand, those who hold to a realist meta-ethic,[121] deny the importance of the publicity condition. So in response to Williams' question, the fact that consequentialism may have a total self-effacing character does not show it is unacceptable as a moral theory, rather, it merely shows that no one ought to accept and apply it. In realist terms, consequentialism is still true even though it violates the publicity requirement and plays no normative role.[122] Realists "do not regard the claim that a theory ought not to be...disseminated as equivalent or tantamount to the claim

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can be shown to be irrational. D. H. Hodgson, Consequences of Utilitarianism (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 60.

[120] Rawls lists "publicity" as one of the constraints or conditions of adequacy imposed on a moral theory. Rawls, A Theory of Justice, pp. 130; 133; 177-182; 582-583. See also Kurt Baier, The Moral Point of View (Oxford: Cornell University Press, 1958), pp. 195-196.

[121] Those who hold to a realist meta-ethic believe that the true moral theory is one that corresponds with a real moral fact. For a more detailed account of this type of moral realism see Richard N. Boyd, "How to Be a Moral Realist," in Essays on Moral Realism, ed. Geoffrey Sayre-McCord (New York: Cornell University Press, 1988), pp. 181-228; Brink, Moral Realism and the Foundations of Ethics (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); Brink, "Moral Realism and the Skeptical Arguments from Disagreement and Queerness," Australasian 62 (June 1984):111-125; Mark Platts, "Moral Reality," in Essays on Moral Realism, pp. 282-300; and Torbjorn Tannsjo, Moral Realism (Maryland: Romand and Littlefield, 1990).

[122] Brink, "Utilitarian Morality and the Personal Point of View," pp. 427-428; Langenfus, "Self-effacing Consequentialism," p. 488; Parfit, Reasons and Persons, pp. 43; 50; and Railton, "Alienation," p. 155.

that the theory is false."[123] Realists can make this claim because they make a distinction between the truth conditions of a theory and its acceptance-conditions, in that, the acceptance value is not the same as the truth value and that a theory can be true without being accepted and applied. In other words, the truth of a theory is not contingent in any way on its acceptance on the part of agents.[124]

It should be noted that the distinction between the truth conditions of a theory and its acceptance conditions is generally recognized in relation to nonmoral theories. For moral realists, however, the distinction is made not only in connection with nonmoral theories but also in connection with moral ones. Here, the realist relies on an analogy between nonmoral and moral theories.[125] But is this analogy appropriate? Are moral theories analogous to scientific ones? If the analogy is appropriate--thus making the distinction between truth and acceptance value appropriate in connection with moral theories--then consequentialism, as simply true, is true in an insignificant way.[126]

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[123] Scheffler, The Rejection of Consequentialism, p. 50. See also Langenfus, "Self-effacing Consequentialism," p. 488. In using terms such as "true" and "false" in relation to moral theories, realists seem to turn questions of ethics into questions of epistemology. What they are offering is an epistemological theory about truth claims (e.g. correspondence theory of truth).

[124] Brink, "Utilitarian Morality and the Personal Point of View," p. 428; Langenfus, "Self-effacing Consequentialism," p. 488; Parfit, Reasons and Persons, p. 43; Railton, "Alienation," p. 155; and Scheffler, The Rejection of Consequentialism, pp. 50-51.

[125] Brink, "Utilitarian Morality and the Personal Point of View," p. 428; Railton, "Alienation," p. 155; and Scheffler, The Rejection of Consequentialism, pp. 50-52.

[126] In order to avoid the problem of agency, the realist cannot believe that consequentialism is true. She only can believe that moral theories can be true even though they cannot be accepted and applied.

All of this leads to a more general question which concerns the purpose of ethical theories. What is the purpose of an ethical theory? What is to be expected from it? Should a moral theory merely mirror reality like theoretical theories having only theoretical interest and accomplishing nothing? If so, then what would be the point of having a moral theory that played no role in moral reasoning but was simply true?[127] The study of ethics is fundamentally a study that focuses on how agents should live; and how they should live is a question that goes beyond theoretical interest. Or, should a moral theory set standards which, in turn, guide agents in how they should live their lives? If so, then the theory must be publicly accepted. The realist metaethic is a misinterpretation and distortion of what moral theories are for. The analogy between nonmoral and moral theories is not an appropriate one because of the social nature of morality and the fundamental questions that it raises. "Many...feel that the content of practical principles is properly determined by their role in human social life in a way that the content of theoretical laws governing the behavior of physical objects is not."[128] An adequate moral theory is one that is normative --normative in the sense that it can play a role in moral deliberation and render standards which guide agents in making moral decisions. Total self-effacing consequentialism may avoid the problem of agency, but at what cost?

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[127] Williams makes this point in relation to utilitarianism specifically. The point certainly can be made also in relation to any other type of theory which may have a totally self-effacing character.

[128] Scheffler, The Rejection of Consequentialism, p. 52.

Moral Theories which Consist of an Impersonal Element: Permitting Agents to Act either "Contrary to" or "Apart from" Their Character

In Chapter Two, it was shown that a particular problem of subjectivity arises for consequentialism when it is applied: the problem of integrity. Consequentialism requires the agent to devote energy and attention to his reasons of autonomy in strict proportion to their value impersonally considered, despite their importance to the agent which is disproportionate to and therefore independent of their value when assessed from an impersonal standpoint. Consequently, the agent is only allowed to pursue his reasons of autonomy when doing so would produce the best state of affairs; otherwise, the agent is required to abandon them whenever this would produce the best state of affairs. Because the independence of the subjective point of view is not reflected, consequentialism violates the agent's integrity by demanding too much.

Consequentialist attempts to accommodate the problem of integrity were also discussed and shown to be inadequate. Counting integrity as a dominant good among others does not resolve the problem since all consequentialist theories rank states of affairs from best to worst according to their goodness from an impersonal standpoint and not according to their goodness for an individual agent. Thus, consequentialist theories that count integrity as a dominant good among others, rank states of affairs by the amount of integrity they produce overall and not by the amount they produce for the individual agent. After states of affairs have been impersonally ranked, the agent is

required to perform the act which produces the best state of affairs. As a result, if sacrificing his reasons of autonomy would be productive of the best state of affairs in the sense of maximizing integrity overall, then this is what the agent is required to do. So even though integrity is counted as a dominant good, the subjective point of view has no moral significance apart from the weight that point of view has from an impersonal standpoint and so is not independent of its impersonal value. In reflecting the importance of integrity overall (by counting it as a good among others) rather than the importance of the agent's own integrity--which is the essential point of the objection--the independence of the subjective standpoint is not taken into account at the most fundamental level. And by not taking it into account, this more sophisticated form of consequentialism does not avoid the problem.

Satisficing consequentialism which counts as right an action which produces states of affairs which are good enough in relation to the best state of affairs does not meet the objection either. Even though satisficing consequentialism does not share the same conception of the right as maximizing forms, it does however share a different aspect of that conception: the strict proportionality feature. Like maximizing forms, satisficing consequentialism ranks states of affairs from best to worst according to their value impersonally considered and not according to their value for an individual agent. After states of affairs have been ranked, the agent is required to perform the act which is good enough impersonally considered. Consequently, like optimizing forms, this conception of the right requires the agent to devote energy and attention to his reasons of autonomy in strict proportion to their value as assessed from an impersonal

standpoint, notwithstanding their importance to the agent which is disproportionate to and therefore independent of their value impersonally considered. So even though less is required in terms of the amount of good produced, satisficing consequentialism does not allow the subjective point of view any role in determining what the agent may do independently of its value from an impersonal standpoint.

It was then shown that the notion of an agent-centered permission, as proposed by Nagel and Scheffler does meet the objection from integrity.[129] An agent-centered permission does reflect the independence of the subjective point of view at the most fundamental level, in that, reasons for action can end with a reference to the individual agent. It allows agents to devote attention to their reasons of autonomy out of proportion to their value as assessed from an impersonal standpoint. An agent would not be required always to produce the best (or good enough) state of affairs and so an agent-centered permission does not entail the strict proportionality requirement. Such a permission would be a truly agent-centered permission, for its purpose is to deny that what an agent is permitted to do in every circumstance is limited strictly to what would

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[129] Again, Nagel and Scheffler do not try to accommodate the problem within a purely consequentialist framework. Their conceptions of morality are non-consequentialist in that they consist of a disjunctive conception of the right. For Scheffler, an action is right if it either produces the best state of affairs impersonally considered or it preserves the agent's reasons of autonomy in an appropriate way. Scheffler, The Rejection of Consequentialism, pp. 5; 14; 61-62. Nagel's conception of morality also results in a disjunctive conception of the right, however, unlike Scheffler, this consists of consequentialism and deontology (see Chapter One above). Even though an agent-centered permission is not part of his conception of the right (but part of his conception of rationality), it is part of Nagel's overall moral framework, in that, an agent-centered permission is meant to mitigate the demands of the consequentialist aspect of his moral theory. Nagel, View, pp. 189; 205. For both Nagel and Scheffler, the consequentialist aspect of their conceptions of morality seems to be predominant.

result in the best (or good enough) state of affairs impersonally considered. And in denying this, it allows the subjective point of view a role in determining what the agent may do apart from what is impersonally justified.

In Chapter Three reasons of autonomy are seen in terms of being the expression of the agent's internalized conception of value and therefore a part of his character. And it is the agent's character that provides his reasons for acting and so determines his action and what he ought to do. In light of the account of human agency rendered in Chapter Three, the problem is not that consequentialism does not reflect the independence of the subjective point of view and so demands too much but that it threatens a necessary condition of agency by requiring the agent to act either contrary to or apart from his character. As was shown in Chapter Four, the problem has to do with agency and not the integrity of the agent.

Now the conceptions of morality which are offered by Nagel and Scheffler may avoid the integrity problem by incorporating an agent-centered permission which allows agents to act from their character; however, these conceptions do not avoid the problem of agency because they consist of an impersonal element: consequentialism. Even though the agent is permitted to act from his character and therefore not required to always produce the best state of affairs, he is always permitted to produce the best state of affairs.[130] In other words, consequentialism can be applied by the agent at any time,

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[130] It should be remembered that for both Nagel and Scheffler an agent is never prohibited from performing actions that maximize impersonal value. And although Nagel incorporates deontological restrictions into his conception of morality, these restrictions do not override consequentialist considerations.

thus playing a direct role in moral reasoning. Consequently, the agent is always permitted to act contrary to his character if this is what would produce the best state of affairs.[131] And even if what is required by the agent's character produces the best state of affairs, the agent, in applying consequentialism, is not acting from the standpoint of his character but apart from it since the action is done because it produces impersonal value. It is an action which is done from an impersonal standpoint: the standpoint of objectivity. The problem of agency arises for these conceptions of morality because they permit/require agents to act from an impersonal standpoint--whether that means acting contrary to their character, or apart from it. And as was argued in Chapter Four, this threatens a necessary condition of agency.

The conceptions of morality which are offered by Nagel and Scheffler do not go far enough. They do reflect subjectivity but only to a certain degree. Because these conceptions consist of an impersonal element they do not reflect the account of agency which is given in Chapter Three. And as will be argued in the subsequent chapter, the only conceptions of morality which reflect this account are those that do not require or permit agents to act from an impersonal standpoint.

To conclude, in Chapter Three it was shown that subjectivity, defined in terms of character, is ineliminable with regard to human agency. The present chapter has delineated the particular problem of subjectivity this account of agency poses for both purely impersonal moral theories and those which consist of an impersonal element:

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[131] As was shown in Chapter Two, for both Nagel and Scheffler the agent may at times be required (rather than permitted) to act contrary to his character because of consequentialist considerations.

theories which either require or permit agents to act either contrary to or apart from their character.

CHAPTER V

IMPLICATION FOR MORAL THEORY

In Chapter One, the individual agent involved in moral deliberation was situated within Nagel's overall framework since the problem of subjectivity arises because of the level of objectivity at which moral deliberation occurs. In Chapter Two, a general characterization of reasons of autonomy was rendered and a particular problem of subjectivity (the problem of integrity) which arises for consequentialist theories was set forth. The recent proposals that have been put forward in response to the problem were also presented and assessed. In Chapter Three, reasons of autonomy were seen in terms of being the expression of the agent's character. A metaethical account of human agency was given by developing the notion of character and showing its relation to agency. It was shown that subjectivity, defined in terms of character, is ineliminable with regard to moral deliberation and that human agency is essentially personal. In Chapter Four, it was shown how this account of agency poses a problem for certain types of moral theories that either require or permit the agent to act either contrary to or apart from her character. The problem of agency was differentiated from both the problem of integrity as presented in Chapter Two and the particular problem of subjectivity that is put forward by Williams. The purpose of this chapter is

to discuss the implication this metaethical account of agency has for normative ethics and the type of moral theory that would reflect this account. The purpose here is not to offer a substantive normative theory all worked out[1] but to discuss the type of theory that would avoid the problem of agency and to set forth some of the issues which need to be addressed by such a theory.

As was shown, for both purely impersonal theories and those which consist of an impersonal element, the agent is required or permitted to act either contrary to or apart from her character--required or permitted to act from an impersonal standpoint: the standpoint of objectivity. In acting contrary to her internalized conception of value the agent is not acting from the standpoint of her character. Rather, the agent is performing the action because it is impersonally justified and not because it is an action which is required by her character (since the action is contrary to it). It was also shown, that even if the action that is required by the theory is also required by the agent's character (so acting contrary to her character is not required), the agent, in deciding upon her action by this objective criterion, is not acting from the standpoint of her character but performs the action because it can be justified from an impersonal standpoint. In either case, the fact that the action can be impersonally justified--justified from a standpoint which is detached from the standpoint of the individual agent--is the reason why the action is performed.

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[1] A substantive theory will be forthcoming. The purpose of the present work is not to offer a substantive theory but to give a metaethical account of agency and to delineate the problem this poses for certain types of moral theories. What is offered is a metaethical groundwork which, in turn, justifies a certain type of moral theory.

In Chapter Three it was shown that subjectivity, defined in terms of character, is ineliminable with regard to human agency--the agent acts from a subjective standpoint: the standpoint of her character. It is the agent's internalized conception of value that determines action; and so what the agent does arises from the sort of person she is. The agent acts justly because she values justice and not because the value of justice can be impersonally justified. Her action is an expression of her character and is something that she ought to do because she is committed to certain values. It was then shown how this account of agency poses a problem for certain types of moral theories that either require or permit an agent to act either contrary to or apart from her character: the problem of agency. By requiring or permitting the agent to act, but not from the standpoint of her character, a necessary condition of agency is threatened. Since the agent acts from her internalized conception of value, in order for the agent to perform certain kinds of actions that are contrary to her character, she must have a different set of values. In other words, the agent must have a different sort of character and so be an empirically different kind of person. It is the agent's character that qualifies and sets the boundaries for action. It is the agent's character that determines the possibilities and limitations of actions and what the agent can and cannot do.

It is imperative to understand at the outset that the issue here is not about objectivism (versus subjectivism) but about the objective and subjective standpoints. The issue is agency and the standpoint from which the agent acts. The problem of agency arises for certain types of moral theories because of their fundamental assumption regarding agency. And here it is important to point out that the problem of

agency only arises for objective moral theories--theories that justify the rightness of actions impersonally. The problem does not arise because actions are impersonally justified, but rather, it arises because the agent is required or permitted to act from that standpoint: a standpoint which is detached from the standpoint of the individual agent. The problem of agency arises because of the type of objective theories they are and not because they are objective theories. Subjectivism, on the other hand, avoids the problem of agency because the agent is not required or permitted to act from an impersonal standpoint. The agent is not required or permitted to act from an impersonal standpoint because the rightness of actions is personally justified. That is, actions are right because they express the values the agent happens to have. But the reason why the problem of agency does not arise for subjectivism is not because actions are personally justified but because agency is personal[2]--personal in the sense that the agent acts from her internalized conception of value: from the standpoint of her character.

Now what is the implication of all this for ethics? The implication is that moral theory should reflect this account of human agency. The type of theory that would reflect this account is conceptually different from the moral theories discussed in Chapter Four. The difference has to do with its fundamental assumption regarding moral agency: the assumption that moral agency is essentially personal, in that, what the agent ought to do has to do with her internalized conception of value. But the

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[2] Of course, in the case of subjectivism, the reason why agency is personal is because actions are personally justified.

conclusion to be drawn from this is not subjectivism. For one can be an objectivist in ethics and yet have a different conception of moral agency than the theories discussed. A moral theory can be objective without requiring or permitting agents to act from the standpoint of objectivity.

The type of theory that would reflect this account of agency is a character development theory. The purpose of this type of theory is to tell us what constitutes a good character. The focus here is on the kind of person the agent is rather than on what actions she should perform. What kind of agents we should be is a more fundamental consideration for this type of theory. A character development theory would not require or permit the agent to act from an impersonal standpoint--to act either contrary to or apart from her character. Acting from any type of character, however, is not what should be concluded here. The values which constitute a good character need not be personally justified, meaning they need not be based on the agent and what she happens to value. A character development theory can be objective, in that, the values which constitute a good character can be impersonally justified--justified from a standpoint which is detached from the standpoint of the individual agent. The impersonal justification, however, is not the reason <u>why</u> the agent acts. In other words, the agent does not act from the standpoint of objectivity. This is because it is a character development theory. And so if there are objective values, these must be related to the agent in the sense of being internalized and made part of a subjective point of view. These values must become the agent's values. So even though an impersonal justification can be given for values, thus safeguarding

objectivity, this is not the motivation for acting. The motivation is personal, in that, the agent acts from her internalized conception of value--from the standpoint of subjectivity.

Even though a character development theory can be objective by offering values that are impersonally justified, it need not be. One could espouse subjectivism and argue that the values which constitute a good character are personally justified and so based on values the agent happens to have. The issue now is not agency, but rather, how values are to be justified within a character development theory. And it is in relation to the justification of values and the level of objectivity at which they are to be justified that the debate between objectivism and subjectivism occurs. While avoiding the problem of agency, it can be asked whether a character development theory which justifies values personally is a normative one. Of course it could be argued that it is normative, in that, the values that the agent has are the values she should have. This, however, is not what is usually meant by normative. For those doing moral philosophy it is important both to know and evaluate the values agents have. Subjectivism is not normative in the sense of offering some kind of objective standard by which the values of the individual agent can be evaluated; and since the standard is the agent, there is no possibility for evaluation. Good values, then, are the values the agent happens to have.

There are, however, higher levels of objectivity at which values can be justified. One could argue that the values which constitute a good character are those which are accepted by one's culture. Here the justification is local, it is internal to the practices and traditions of each society or group. This type of justification for values is

impersonal in the sense that it is not based on the agent and what she happens to value; the agent is not the standard. The standard is society and the values it accepts; society is the standard by which the agent's values can be evaluated. But what standard is used to evaluate the values accepted by society? Since society is the standard, there is no possibility for evaluation. Good values are the values society happens to accept. Even though values are justified at a higher level of objectivity, most would not consider this a great improvement over subjectivism because of the implications of this for doing ethics. If there is no outside standard by which societal values can be judged, then change and progress within a society are not possible. The justification for values, however, need not be based on society and what it accepts.[3] Other reasons can be given for the goodness of values. The highest level of objectivity at which values can be justified transcends both the individual and society by offering standards which are independent of the individual and society, standards by which the values of the individual and those of society can be evaluated.[4]

What are these standards by which values can be justified?[5] To start, values could be justified based on Kant's principle of universality. Here, the values which

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[3] It should be noted that in the recent literature on moral education most character education proponents, though rejecting subjectivism, think that the values a culture accepts are the values which should be inculcated. This level of justification for values, however, is not necessary to a character development theory. Values can be justified at a higher level of objectivity.

[4] Because of the level of objectivity at which values are justified, these will be transcultural (non-relative) values, values that apply to all cultures.

[5] The purpose here is not to evaluate these standards or to discuss all the possible standards that can be used, but rather, to give some familiar examples of how values

constitute a good character are those which can be conceived without contradiction if universally acted upon. That is, they must be values that would not destroy a systematic harmony of human ends and purposes (purposes within the race and within the individual). They must be values that would not be inconsistent with the "principle of humanity."[6] And those values which do not violate the principle of humanity must pass the second criterion of universality. They must be able to be willed without contradiction. The question here is not whether these values would destroy a systematic harmony of ends--since the values in question can be conceived without contradiction if universally acted upon--but whether they would advance or harmonize positively with it. The criterion by which values are justified and evaluated is the ideal systematic harmony of human ends and purposes. And only those values which can be conceived and willed are considered to be morally legitimate.

Another standard by which values can be justified would be Aristotle's notion of human nature and what is essential to properly human life. Here, the justification of values is based on the characteristic functioning and potentialities of human beings. For Aristotle all of this has to do with the telos or purpose of human beings and what human beings could be if they realized their essential nature. The values which constitute a good character are those which are compatible with and further human

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can be impersonally justified. And of course, at this level of objectivity there will be disagreement with regard to the objective standard by which values are to be justified.

[6] Kant, Fundamental Principles, pp. 46; 47.

functioning and potentialities.[7]

Other possible standards are the principle of utility and Rawl's "original position". In terms of the former, the values which constitute a good character are those which when acted upon would produce the best state of affairs; in terms of the latter, good values are those which would be chosen by rational contractors behind a veil of ignorance.[8]

From the above examples of how values can be impersonally justified, it is evident that values can be justified in different ways. A character development theory as such does not commit one to justify values in a particular way, and so at this level of objectivity, the question as to which standard should be used is left open. But no

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[7] Both Kant and Aristotle recognize that in order to understand human nature the concept of purpose is necessary; for it is an essential characteristic of human nature to set ends before itself. Because of this, it is important that the values which are acted upon be consistent with the telos of human beings. It is also important to point out that a "pure ethic" is not precluded in terms of how values can be justified within a character development theory. The objective standard itself need not be based on or deduced from the nature of any type of being (human or non-human). For Kant the standard is universality. For Aristotle the standard is the good functioning of a nature. Both of these standards can be applied to any type of being who is capable of valuing and acting. For example, if the beings under consideration are angels, then for Kant, good values are those which would further or harmonize positively with a systematic harmony of angelic ends and purposes. For Aristotle, good values are those which would be compatible with and further angelic functioning and potentialities. Although these standards are "pure" in the sense that they are not based on the nature of any particular being, Kant and Aristotle acknowledge that at the level of application ethics is a species-relative matter. The concern here, however, is not with how these standards can be applied to every type of being and the values relevant to each type, but rather, the concern is with the application of these standards to human beings and the values relevant to humans.

[8] Rawls, A Theory of Justice, pp. 118-192. The purpose of Rawls' work is to justify certain principles of justice for institutions. The original position also can be used to justify values that apply to individuals. Ibid., p. 340.

matter how values are impersonally justified, within the context of a character development theory these (objective) values must be internalized. The question now is, how are these values to be internalized? This question concerns the issue of moral education to which we shall now turn.

In the recent literature on character or values education one can find a wide range of methods (most of which are familiar)[9] for inculcating moral

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[9] There is some disagreement among proponents of character education as to which method or combination of methods is most effective and at what age these methods should be used. For discussions on character development and more detailed accounts of the various methods used see William J. Bennett, "The Teacher, the Curriculum, and Values Education Development," New Directions for Higher Education 31 (1980):27-34; Bennett, "What Value Is Values Education?," American Educator 4 (1980):31-32; William J. Bennett and Edwin J. Delattre, "Moral Education in the Schools," Public Interest 50 (1978):81-98; Bennett and Delattre, "A Moral Education: Some Thoughts on How Best to Achieve It," American Educator 3 (1979):6-9; Delattre and Bennett, "Where the Values Movement Goes Wrong," Change 11 (1979):38-43; J. Fraenkel, How to Teach About Values: An Analytical Approach (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1979); William Kirk Kilpatrick, "Moral Character: Story-Telling and Virtue, in Psychological Foundations of Moral Education and Character Development, pp. 183-199; Kilpatrick, Psychological Seduction: The Failure of Modern Psychology (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1983); Kilpatrick, "The Use of Literature in Character Formation," in Content, Character and Choice in Schooling: Public Policy and Research Implications: Proceedings of a Symposium, April 24, 1986, by the National Council on Education Research (1986); Thomas Lickona, Raising Good Children (New York: Bantam Books, 1985); Meilaender, The Theory and Practice of Virtue; Fritz K. Oser, "Moral Education and Values Education: The Discourse Perspective," in Handbook of Research on Teaching, 3rd ed., ed. Merlin Wittrock (New York: Macmillan, 1986); Kevin Ryan, "In Defense of Character Education," in Moral Development and Character Education, ed. Larry P. Nucci (Berkeley: McCutchan, 1989), pp. 3-17; Kevin Ryan and George F. McLean, eds., Character Development in Schools and Beyond (New York: Praeger, 1987); Christina H. Sommers, "Ethics without Virtue: Moral Education in America," American Scholar 53 (1984); Sommers, "Teaching the Virtues," in The Public Interest (Spring 1993): 3-13; Herbert J. Walberg and Edward A. Wynne, "Character Education: Toward a Preliminary Consensus," in Moral Development and Character Education, pp. 37-50; Marilyn Watson et al., "The Child Development Project: Combining Traditional and Developmental Approaches to Values Education," in Moral Development and

values[10] such as:

1. Teacher and parent modeling. Values are learned indirectly from those around us, who serve as exemplars. Other indirect sources of moral examples are biographies of highly moral people; newspaper articles about good deeds that are performed; and examples of good deeds that are encountered in our personal experience.

2. Direct moral instruction. "This is the notion that it's not only important to practice what you preach; it's also important to preach what you practice. Direct moral teaching often takes the form of explaining things to children. Why is it wrong to call people names? Because name-calling hurts; the hurt is inside where it can't be seen, but it's real."[11] Regarding direct moral instruction a distinction is usually made between "teaching" moral values and "indoctrinating." It is argued that teachers should "foster the learning of moral values by providing explanations and experiences that help children to understand...why adherence to a particular value is important."[12]

3. Teaching values through literature and poetry (dramatic/narrative; study of the classics). Alasdair MacIntyre points out that "in all those cultures, Greek, Medieval or

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Character Education, pp. 51-92; James Q. Wilson, "The Rediscovery of Character: Private Virtue and Public Policy," Public Interest 81 (Fall 1985):3; Edward A. Wynne, "Transmitting Traditional Values in Contemporary Schools," in Moral Development and Character Education, pp. 19-36; and Wynne and Walberg, eds., Developing Character: Transmitting Knowledge (Posen, Illinois: ARL, 1984).

[10] Again, what those values are will depend on the level of objectivity at which they are justified.

[11] Thomas Lickona, "Character Development in the Family," in Character Development in Schools and Beyond, pp. 259-260.

[12] Watson et al., "The Child Development Project," p. 85.

Renaissance,...the chief means of moral education is the telling of stories."[13] According to Kevin Ryan and Thomas Lickona, "we can talk to children in abstract terms about deceit, and hatred and loyalty and love, but when they come face to face with those qualities enfleshed in unforgettable characters, like the Wicked White Witch and the great and gentle Aslan in C. S. Lewis's Chronicles of Narnia, they feel repelled by the evil and drawn, irresistibly, to the good."[14] So through story-telling children not only learn "to distinguish between good and evil but to love the one and hate the other."[15]

It should be noted that proponents of character education make a distinction between story-telling and the presentation of moral dilemmas (which is the contemporary replacement for story-telling), and that it is the former which is essential to character development.[16] The presentation of dilemmas is important in that it does "teach something about the logic of moral discourse and the practice of moral reasoning in resolving [value conflicts], but casuistry is not the place to start, and taken by itself, dilemma ethics provides little or no moral sustenance."[17] According to Meilaender,

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[13] Alasdair MacIntyre, After Virtue (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984), p. 121.

[14] Kevin Ryan and Thomas Lickona, "Character Development: The Challenge and the Model," in Character Development in Schools and Beyond, p. 24.

[15] Kilpatrick, Psychological Seduction, p. 112.

[16] On this distinction see Kilpatrick, "Story-Telling and Virtue," pp. 183-187; and Kilpatrick, "The Use of Literature in Character Formation," pp. 85-92.

[17] Sommers, "Teaching the Virtues," p. 13.

"character should be the first goal of moral education....Only those in whom some of the basic moral attitudes have been developed...can profit from a more systematic and sophisticated study of ethics...[and] profit from thinking about the 'hard cases'."[18] This level of teaching is dependent on character development and the inculcation of certain values. If honesty is not something which is valued, then certain dilemmas having to do with truthfulness cannot even be recognized.

4. Community service and guided reflection on its meaning. The general concept here is that children learn by doing. They learn to care and to value caring by performing caring actions. This concept, of course, pertains to learning other values as well.

5. Cooperative learning and helping relations. What is suggested here is that students work and talk together so as to form a social community. The values involved in this approach are cooperation, empathy, racial harmony, and mutual support.

6. Cross curriculum repetition of values.

> This guiding principle urges that, where appropriate, the nurturing of moral attitudes and behaviors be echoed or repeatedly dealt with in several courses within the same academic year. Such repetition will mutually reinforce, from class to class, the learnings being sought. For example, a student who hears of the injurious effects of racial stereotyping in his or her science, literature, and social studies classes is more likely to grasp that notion than if only one teacher dealt with it. This implies that there is some planning going on between teachers of various disciplines in the same grade level for such mutually reinforcing classroom learnings.
>
> Moreover, this guiding principle suggests that the curriculum be sequentially planned so that the more basic and easily grasped moral issues be dealt with in the earlier grades, with the more difficult ones tackled in the upper grades.[19]

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[18] Ibid., pp. 83; 81.

[19] Robert J. Starratt, "Moral Education in the High School Classroom," in Character Development in Schools and Beyond, p. 231.

7. Self-esteem building activities. Here the idea is to teach children to value themselves as persons, to have self-respect in order to respect others in a social community.

8. The school-wide just community. This approach to character development sets out to form collective values.

> In the just community schools, teachers, counselors, administrators, and students share to a degree the responsibilities of teaching, counseling, and leadership.... [D]ecisions which affect the school as a whole are brought to the community for discussion and resolution. Generally these decisions have to do with disciplinary rules on fighting, stealing, vandalism, attendance, and drug use and with policies affecting the quality of social interaction in the schools, for example, attempts to bring about greater racial and ethnic integration.[20]

9. Role-playing. Here, values such as empathy (through role-reversal) and forgiveness are focused on.

10. For higher grades methods such as moral discussion and debate; reflective discussions of values; and research on moral issues are used.

For those who espouse subjectivism and argue that values are personally justified, moral education takes on another form, in that, character development is not about inculcating values (since this implies objective values) but about clarifying the values the agent has. For values clarification proponents[21] guiding value decisions is

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[20] Clark Power, "School Climate and Character Development," in Character Development in Schools and Beyond, p. 161.

[21] For discussions on values clarification and detailed accounts of the various methods used see Brian P. Hall, Value Clarification as Learning Process, 3 vols. (Paulist Press: 1973); H. Kirschenbaum, Advanced Value Clarification (LaJolla, California: University Associates, 1977); H. Kirschenbaum and Sidney B. Simon, eds., Readings in Values Clarification (Minneapolis: Winston Press, 1973); Louis E. Raths, Merrill Harmin, and Sidney B. Simon, Values and Teaching: Working with Values in the Classroom, 2nd ed. (Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill, 1978); Maury Smith, A

not allowed.[22] "[T]he teacher must be non-judgmental and accepting. If the teacher--no matter how subtly--were to...provide standards [by which these values can be evaluated], he would be depriving students of the privilege of making their own decisions."[23] According to value clarification proponents, the internalization of certain values via the methods enumerated above precludes free choice. Here free choice is taken to mean freedom to choose from a series of alternatives that are equally presented.[24] But what society presents value alternatives equally? Are all values to be accorded equal respect? Do all values have equal validity? For those who support this approach to moral education the answer is yes. The implication of this is that children cannot be taught that anything is right or wrong; good or bad.

> In the past, philosophy and theology sought to understand and define values: objective, ontological, metaphysical, and moral values. Most of us still feel the effects of the Puritan and Victorian eras, when values were defined primarily in terms of moralistic "shoulds" and "should nots." Value clarification as a methodology considers this moralistic stance to be an imposition upon the individual of predetermined values, and it seeks instead a method whereby individuals can discover their own values. Thus, value clarification does not tell a person what his values should be or what values he should live by; it simply provides the means for him to discover what values he does live by....The intended consequence of a value clarification exercise is that you may come to know what "is," but never what "ought to be."[25]

Practical Guide to Value Clarification (LaJolla, California: University Associates, 1977); and Sidney B. Simon and Polly deSherbinin, "Values Clarification: It Can Start Gently and Grow Very Deep," Phi Delta Kappan 56 (June 1975).

[22] Raths, Harmin, and Simon, Values and Teaching, p. 170.

[23] Ibid., p. 113.

[24] Ibid., ch. 4.

[25] Smith, A Practical Guide to Value Clarification, pp. 5; 192.

And since there are no values that "ought" to be accepted, subjectivism and its form of moral education is purely descriptive and thereby morally neutral.[26] All that is required is that the agent articulate, affirm, and live by the values that she has, whatever those values happen to be.

Again, the claim can be made that subjectivism is not a normative character development theory in the sense of offering some kind of standard by which the values of the individual agent can be evaluated.[27] The study of ethics, however, is both descriptive and prescriptive; it is not concerned only with the values the agent happens to have but with the values the agent "ought" to have. Subjectivism, on the other hand, does not prescribe anything; it leaves the agent's value system intact. This is not to say that the method of values clarification has no place within a total program of character education, but within such a framework the purpose of clarifying values is to evaluate them. For those doing normative ethics clarifying (describing) is not enough, for no matter how much we clarify our values we can still be wrong, objectively.

The two issues then that have to be addressed by a character development theory are: the justification of values and the level of objectivity at which they are to be justified; and the method(s) of moral education to be used. How values are to be

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[26] Richard Baer questions the possibility of moral neutrality and claims that values clarification as a teaching methodology is itself value-laden. Baer, "Values Clarification as Indoctrination," Educational Forum 41 (January 1977):155-165.

[27] And the purpose of the present chapter is to discuss the implication of the account of agency given for moral theory.

justified and how they are best internalized or clarified needs to be worked out in any substantive character development theory.[28]

In conclusion, if we want agents to perceive certain features of a situation as morally significant (as involving certain values) and if we want agents to perform actions that reflect certain values, that is, if we want agents to be just, to care for their families, to speak truthfully, to care for those in need, and so on, then these values must be made part of a subjective point of view; these values must be the agent's values. If we want moral theory to guide practical deliberation then it is necessary to understand the type of beings who are to apply it and be motivated by it. And since the concern here is with human beings, it is necessary to understand human agency. The structure of human agency must aid the moral philosopher in theory construction. An adequate moral theory is one that does not require or permit agents to act either contrary to or apart from their character, that is, to act from an impersonal standpoint. It tells us what values constitute a good character and how these values are justified and internalized. If moral theory is to be efficacious in regulating human behavior, then it must reflect human phenomenology.

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[28] And how values are best internalized (vs clarified) needs to be worked out in any substantive normative character development theory.

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The final copies have been examined by the director of the dissertation and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated and that the dissertation is now given final approval by the committee with reference to content and form.

The dissertation is, therefore, accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

April 5, 1995
Date

Victoria S Wike
Director's Signature